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1979/06/00

MODERNIZATION AND CHINESE
STRATEGIC DEBATE

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JUNE 1979

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Strategy and Modernization

This study treats Chinese strategy in the context of China's current modernization program. As China modernizes and begins to fulfill its potential as a global power, the strategic situation in Asia will present both opportunities and dangers to U.S. policy. The current state of Chinese strategic thought is in great flux: it is probably more open to debate now than at any time since the end of the Korean War. The outcome of this strategic debate will for the foreseeable future affect the Asian balance of power and the role of U.S. military force in it.

The relationship between modernization and strategy is a critical one because what the Chinese decide to give priority to will determine to a large extent the level and type of military capability they will have during the next two decades. Thus there are two central features to the current strategic debate: how much to devote to defense and how to allocate the defense budget among different service and force structures.

The Strategic Debate

The key to understanding the strategic implications of China's modernization is recognition of the elements in the strategic debate between two lines defined by

radical and professional position within the decision making bodies. In military and defense matters, the two lines have led to different policies. The politically oriented or "Maoist" line in these issues is summarized in Mao's doctrine of People's War, which fully integrates civilian and military aspects of policy. This position tends to the extreme of Lenin's category of left wing extremism: it hinders development by pushing too fast, being too uncompromising in its revolutionary stance, and too extreme in the insistence on military self-reliance. On the other hand, the professional line tends to favor a conventional view of war that differentiates military from civilian aspects of war. This position further tends to the extremes of Lenin's right wing opportunism: it hinders communist development by moving too slowly, being too willing to compromise with current conditions, and seeming to lenient in its acceptance of foreign military assistance.

This study argues that the positions of the two sides of the debate are internally consistent. Decisions on certain defense issues will lead to decisions in others. Therefore Chinese trends in decisions on more categories of defense issues may indicate the direction of Chinese strategy. The issues selected in this study include the follow-

1. General Defense Strategy: Defense in depth vs. forward defense.
2. Nature of the threat: Long range (encirclement) vs. immediate (invasion).
3. Weapons systems: Strategic vs. general purpose.
4. Weapons development: Long run vs. quick fix.
5. Area orientation: Global vs. regional.
6. Force structure: Emphasis on militia irregular force vs. main force regulars.
7. Control structure: Central vs. regional control
8. Training emphasis: Political indoctrination vs. military skills.
9. Economic orientation: Self-reliance vs. foreign imports.

Chinese Defense Posture and Problems

Since its inception, China's communist regime has been remarkably consistent in its defense strategy as it has concentrated on three essential problems: threat, support, and domestic development. In 1956, the Chinese considered the U.S. their principal threat, the U.S.S.R. their chief source of support, and general economic development their top domestic priority. In 1979, China's principal threat is the U.S.S.R., the U.S. and the West provide support, and economic development again receives top priority after twenty years of political turmoil.

The current debate will define China's unique national response to strategic concerns facing every major power--the national security problems of risk management, resource allocation, and the management of internal change. China's risk management issues include the problem of the delicate strategic balance between the U.S.S.R. and the U.S., threats posed by regional imbalances of power--particularly in Southeast Asia, and the maintenance of internal order.

In developing a competent military force to manage its risks, China faces severe problems in the management of its scarce resources. China's general poverty, the high cost of modern technology, the inability of the People's Liberation Army to absorb massive technology inputs, and China's own policy of self-reliance dictate against the development of a modern military force. Self-reliance in particular has affected the development of general purpose forces because the high cost of nuclear forces, which the Chinese felt they needed after 1958, forced them to sacrifice conventional force for nuclear. Reorganization and regularization of the P.L.A. pose the most immediate problem for the Chinese. After two decades of domestic disorder and factional strife within the army, the Chinese must not only reform the P.L.A. but reorient it to its military mission. This reorientation includes the difficult task of revising military doctrine from Mao's People's War to one

more suitable to the use of sophisticated weapons on the modern battlefield.

Indication of Changes

The sources of Chinese strategy potentially dictate a shift from the tactically defensive orientation of Mao's People's War to a position of strategic offense. Traditional sources of Chinese strategy reinforce communist strategic principles in providing the basis for this shift in policy. They establish a single goal, allow for tactical flexibility, that leads to strategic concentrations at the moment of execution. Underlying these traditional and communist strategic principles is the Leninist style of Chinese decisionmaking.

What the Chinese have said and done since Mao's death provide relatively clear indications of new directions in defense policy. Events since then indicate that proponents of the professional line have taken charge and are shaping a new defense policy. These events have progressed through four stages--development, decision, implementation, and review. The development stage began even before Mao's death but did not get fully underway until after Teng Hsiao-ping's victory over the Gang of Four. Before the 11th Party Congress in August 1977, the process reached the stage of decision and implementation began with a series of national conferences in late 1977 and early 1978. The

present slowdown in the pace of modernization indicates that policies have been under review since the end of 1978.

Official and unofficial statements emanating from a series of military conferences and celebrations of military holidays in 1977 and 1978 reflect a willingness, if not a determination, on the part of China's new leaders to change the direction of military development. There is a new emphasis on the importance of military hardware and technology.

In contrast to previous radical policies, programs now stress the importance of military skills and education.

The most important program in China's defense modernization is the regularization of the PLS, sorely needed after a decade of near chaos since the Cultural Revolution. Although the reforms of this new program appear under the slogan of apparent compromise with Maoist traditions--People's War under modern conditions, Red and Expert, politics and military skills, the direction of change is toward increased professional orientation.

Capabilities, Production and Development

Current Chinese military capabilities cannot support great power status but China's military posture defined in terms of its production, development, and research capacities shows an increasing potential to achieve this status. While the qualitative improvement of China's large military forces must wait until the mid-1980's, the Chinese have taken

concrete steps to improve these forces within the limits of current capabilities. In addition, they increasingly have assumed a posture of forward defense. Command and air deployments in Manchuria, the restructured relations of Army Main Forces, Regional Force, and militia units in the north, and a cautious projection forward of coastal defense positions appear to fit into an emerging scheme of defense

significantly different from the defense in depth postulated by the doctrine of People's War.

Chinese weapons systems are obsolete. Designed and built according to Soviet models of the 1950's, Chinese weapons are simply inadequate for combat on a modern battlefield. All services to some extent have reached a transition point where they must replace old weapons with those of modern design. To meet this challenge, the Chinese

purchase and production programs seem designed to achieve

a breakthrough in technological limits. The areas in which the Chinese will concentrate these efforts will provide important clues to their overall strategic direction. To a lesser extent, this is also true for Research and Development efforts.

Chinese potential for defense modernization, despite its serious handicaps, should not be underestimated.

China's defense industry, although outdated, is well established and spread throughout the country. The Chinese already spend a higher percentage of their GNP on defense

than do the U.S. and USSR, and the defense industry is relatively well integrated into the economy as a whole. Furthermore, improvements in basic industries under the plan for general modernization will almost automatically show in military production.

The Chinese military development program appears to follow three stages: prototype purchase or development, indigenous adaptation and improvement and finally, local mass production. The one large military-related deal the Chinese have made thus far with the west--the purchase of the Spey engine from the British followed this pattern. This purchase also demonstrates the priority in weapons development the Chinese give to aircraft and air defense. Naval and strategic development also seems to share this priority primarily because of the quick payoffs in these areas from general industrial development. Ground forces lag behind in this respect. However, the Chinese are testing new tank prototypes and expanding their truck industry.

China's New Strategic Direction

The review of China's recent military developments, coupled with an examination of the sources of Chinese military strategy, suggests a distinct shift in China's military posture from Maoist People's War Doctrine to the cautious offensive orientation of the professionals.

Examination of the categories of debate chosen for

this study trend toward stabilizing military policy under professional guidelines in some areas but continued indecision in others. In general, the professional line dominates current economic policy, military training, and force structuring, while radical influence remains evident in general defense posture, weapons production, and weapons development. Ambiguity and indecision are most apparent in issues of threat orientation, foreign policy, and balance of internal military control.

China's defense policy will continue to rest on a military strategy that exploits its geography and huge population, a foreign policy that enlists Western support against a common enemy while attempting to take advantage of the power shifting to the Third World, and an economic program that promises self-sufficiency by about 2000.

In summary, the present Chinese program is designed to insure maximum flexibility in meeting their strategic crisis. Diplomatic strengths compensate for present military weaknesses. Opportunities for expanded diplomatic maneuver balance immediate military threats and an ambitious economic program assisted by increasing foreign technological input complement efforts to build a modern military force.

This study points to the need for refinement of U.S. China policy. While the U.S. since 1969 has been adjusting its policy in recognition of its limited ability to

influence external events, China has begun to adjust its policy in recognition of its growing ability to influence events beyond its borders. The significance of these adjustments during the present period of transition is that China is embarked on a course that will allow it to bring to bear military force on an expanding range of issues, particularly within the Pacific region. Therefore, the challenge facing the U.S. is how to develop the flexibility to take advantage of Chinese power for constructive purposes on one hand and to react to its potential dangers on the other. Important contributions to meeting this challenge are the recognition of the parameters of the Chinese defense debate set by the two lines and sensitivity to the relative influence that either side has on Chinese strategic decisionmaking.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	i
LIST OF TABLE	
I INTRODUCTION	1
II THE PROBLEM OF CHINESE MILITARY MODERNIZATION	4
Risk	5
Chinese Consistency in Risk Management	8
Resource Management	15
Internal Change	20
III INFLUENCES ON CHINESE STRATEGY	26
Traditional Influences	26
The Strategic Debate	34
IV WHAT THE CHINESE SAY	44
Military Modernization	51
Doctrine	56
Summary	60
V CHINESE MILITARY CAPABILITIES	62
Current Capabilities	63
Purchase and Production	71
Research and Development	76
Summary	79
VI CHINA'S MILITARY POSTURE ANALYSIS	81
General Defensive Strategy	84
Nature of the Threat	85
Weapons Systems Priority	87
Pace of Weapons Development	88
Area Orientation and Force Structure	89
Control Structure	90
Military Education and Training	92
Economic Orientation	93
Summary and Review	94
VII CONCLUSIONS	104
NOTES	107

LIST OF TABLES

TABLES	PAGE
I Consistency of Chinese Defense Posture Comparison Between 1956 and Present (1979)	10
II Complementing Elements of Chinese Strategy .	28
III Review of Key Policy Decisions and Major Factors	37
IV Shifts in Chinese Military Policy Since 1953	39
V "Two-Lines" - Military Policy, Doctrine, Strategy	41
VI Summary of Major Conferences and Statements.	47
VII Status and Trends of Chinese Military Debate Issues	95
VIII "Two-Lines" - General Review and Current Assessment	96

MODERNIZATION AND CHINESE STRATEGIC DEBATE

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This study addresses the question of Chinese military strategy in the context of China's current modernization program. The question of Chinese strategy is increasingly important, for China is on the verge of fulfilling a 50 year American hope: that China will exert political and military influence in East Asia in ways significant to great power relations beyond the region. The basis for the promise of China's current position is its apparent determination to modernize the country by the year 2000 coupled with an unusual interest in making its influence felt beyond its borders. Within the last two years, under the post-Mao regime identified with Teng Hsiao-ping, the Chinese have ventured confidently into world affairs and have demonstrated the capability to influence regional events. China's effort to modernize is certain to increase its military power and therefore its ability to support objectives of increasing scale and significance.

The prospect of a modern, powerful Chinese state, brings much ambivalence to American policy. For more than 100 years, American Asian policy has rested on the twin pillars of the Open Door policy: a desire for access to commerce and investment and a need for

partnership with a power willing to share the burdens of maintaining regional order. After nearly a half century of false starts and frustrated hopes, a strong and friendly (or at least neutral) China offers some promise of becoming such a partner. The confrontation policies of the '50s and '60s appear more and more as aberrations in US-China relations, while the resumption of closer ties begun in the '70s appears to be a return to a more normal, and preferred, pattern of affairs. The military significance of this trend is its potential justification for the reduction of U.S. military forces in Asia. Conversely, a strong China, especially if it becomes a superpower, poses a potential threat that could offset the hope for low American military investment. The long-term perspective of America's Chinese policy is therefore bounded on one side by an image of a friendly, prosperous China contributing to regional stability and world peace and on the other side by the prospect of facing a hostile superpower.

The ambivalence of this American perspective is not limited to the long-range perspective of some undefined Chinese threat but immediately affects U.S. policy. China's invasion of Vietnam in early 1979, within days of establishing formal diplomatic relations with the United States, illustrated the immediate poignancy of U.S. policy dilemmas

because it showed sharp limitations on American ability to influence Chinese behavior even on a question as critical as a breach of peace. More important, the invasion created one type of situation which the U.S. will probably face during the next two decades of China's "modernization" and its attendant growth of military power. By taking advantage of its new international position supported, however tacitly by U.S. recognition, China showed itself willing, in pursuit of strategic objectives, to run risks that may draw the U.S. into situations against its will. The invasion also suggests that the Chinese are capable of maneuvering the U.S. into a position where it cannot act. This latter situation could become especially serious if it were to develop over Taiwan.

Thus, the uncomfortable conjunction of American recognition of China and China's invasion of Vietnam demonstrates the need to review and re-evaluate China's military strategy and capability. While the U.S. has shown a clear preference for a return to an Asian policy more consistent with the classic aims of the Open Door and its reduced military position, the Chinese invasion of Vietnam raises serious questions over the wisdom of the direction of this policy.

CHAPTER II

THE PROBLEM OF CHINESE MILITARY MODERNIZATION

It is not at all clear how China will seek to develop its great potential power or how it will employ its new influence and forces in coming years. China's military affairs are in the greatest imaginable flux. Central questions of defense orientation, weapons procurement, force structure and operational doctrine remain unanswered, at least for the present. Defense matters are inextricably entangled with the erratic wanderings of China's 60 year old revolution, itself an uncertain enterprise of incredible complexity. Under the slogan of "Four Modernization" (agriculture, industry, defense, science and technology), the PRC has embarked on a development program that appears to repudiate the radical program of the Cultural Revolution and to break with the recent Maoist past. The defense goals of this ambitious program are to build a military force with 1970s capabilities by 1985 and to compete with the superpowers by about 2000.

This essay, therefore, endeavors to identify the principal influences now shaping the course of Chinese military development and strategic evolution, so as to anticipate some aspects of importance to U.S. political and strategic concerns.

China's strategic situation, to which its military development must respond, is dominated by three categories of problems: management of risks; management of resources; and management of change. These problems are, to be sure, part of the military-strategic concerns of every power. But in each state they take distinctive forms and call forth differing responses. China's perceptions of the problems it faces in these areas, the play of these problems and the perceptions in Chinese politics form the essential content of an appraisal of China's strategic situation as a stimulus to military development.

Risk

China's military concerns fall into three general categories of risk management--confrontations with the superpowers, resolution of border disputes as they relate to larger strategic issues, and maintenance of internal control. Among the superpowers, the Soviet Union poses a threat on several levels; a conventional armored invasion based on the "Manchurian Model,"¹ nuclear attack in support of a limited offensive or massive general assault, and strategic encirclement in Asia.

Although the Soviets currently are China's principal enemy, this does not necessarily mean that the Chinese

consider the U.S. only as a friend. The Chinese appreciate the possible fluidity of strategic situations and recognize the fragility of their new relationship with the U.S. The American threat to China in the 1950's and '60's was defused by the Chinese acceptance of the Nixon Doctrine at the end of the U.S. involvement in Vietnam. But international tensions, especially of the type the Chinese attribute to superpower conflict in their propaganda, could lead to confrontations between China and the U.S.

The immediate possibilities of a Chinese conflict with the U.S. stems from three situations: war in Korea, conflict over Taiwan, and instability in Southeast Asia. A North Korean attack on the south would put great pressure on the Chinese to intervene, particularly if the war were prolonged, and Chinese intervention would certainly lead to direct conflict with the U.S. A confrontation over Taiwan could arise either from an aggressive Chinese policy to isolate Taiwan and force its capitulation through a combination of diplomacy, blockade, and military threat or from a defensive reaction to Taiwan's development of a nuclear capability. Expansion of the Chinese-Vietnamese tensions in Southeast Asia into a regional conflict threatening U.S. interests could also lead to confrontation.

In addition to superpower threats, the Chinese have demonstrated strong concern over the border issues with India,

the Soviet Union, and most recently Vietnam. Several maritime issues also belong under the general heading of border issues and these could lead to Chinese conflicts with the U.S. and its allies. For example, the Chinese contend with the Japanese over oil and fishing rights in the seas south of Japan. There are similar issues with the Philippines in the south and the rights to the Paracels and Spratly Islands remain unresolved. These issues are a significant source of tension in themselves but more importantly they can become sources of manipulation within larger strategic contexts. A slight incident could lead to larger scale confrontation.

A threat often overlooked by Western observers in the post-Mao assessments of China's defense posture is the threat to internal security. Political turmoil of the past decade generally disrupted Chinese force structure. Regular PLA units were diverted to tasks of local political control. Militia units expanded and more often than not became political tools for factions at various levels of government. The result was a dangerous return to chaotic patterns of power reminiscent of the early War Lord period. Despite the apparent consolidation and reforms of the present regime, the legacy of the Cultural Revolution still casts a long shadow over military and civilian leaders. As several Western observers have noted, the present modernization program's emphasis on education, trade, science, and technology comes at the expense of rural

development and equal opportunity programs favored by peasants who benefited from radical policies.² Along with the shift of emphasis also has come a restoration of "bourgeois rights," to use the radicals term. This move made for the sake of efficiently employing the entrepreneurial skills of the former capitalists will further exacerbate the old tensions generated during the Cultural Revolution. Finally, it is worth noting that since 1850, China has not enjoyed a continuous period of domestic tranquility for more than 15 years. The pressures of class conflict, ideological differences, and regional and local interests all combine to threaten a stable internal order.

Chinese Consistency in Risk Management

Despite the shift from the Soviet-oriented policies of the '50s to friendly relations with the U.S. and Western Europe, Chinese defense concerns have been remarkably consistent. Alice Hsieh's examination of Chinese nuclear policy in the '50s and early '60s described three enduring concerns of the Chinese military--immunity from nuclear attack, sufficient forces to support local political objectives, and reduced diversion of resources from civilian development programs.³ The Chinese have matched their consistency in these concerns with their attention to three specific defense issues--the nature of the threat, the source of military support, and the pace of military modernization.

These categories of defense concerns are significant because they suggest a consistent framework within which the Chinese will carry on strategic debate. For this reason, a brief discussion of the parallels between China's strategic situations in 1955 and 1956 and the present will illustrate more clearly just how enduring these Chinese concerns are. Table 1 shows an outline of these parallels.

The principle threat to China in 1956 was "U.S. Imperialism" and the Chinese perceived this imperialism to generate three types of military threats. Conventional-- a large U.S. ground force in Korea was in a position to threaten north China and its critical industrial base while the 600,000 man Nationalist Chinese Army with the support of the U.S. 7th Fleet continued to threaten China's soft southern flank. Nuclear--the U.S. could launch a massive attack or limited strikes against selected military and industrial targets. Strategic encirclement-- through a series of treaties and base negotiations the U.S. was containing and threatening China. Indeed, U.S. policy of record during this period was to overthrow the communist regime on the mainland.⁴

TABLE 1

CONSISTENCY OF CHINESE DEFENSE POSTURE
COMPARISON BETWEEN 1956 AND PRESENT (1979)

	<u>1956</u>	<u>Present</u>
National Objectives	Self-sufficient economy Socialist Development	Modern economy
Threat	From U.S.	From Soviet Union
	1. Conventional: -Large conventional force in Korea -Strong conventional ally in Nationalists on Taiwan	1. Conventional: -Large conventional force on northern borders -Strong conventional ally in Vietnamese
	2. Nuclear: -General strategic threat -Limited air strikes against significant military/industrial facilities	2. Nuclear: -General threat -Surgical strikes -Support to conventional threat
	3. Strategic: -Encirclement and isolation SEATO, Mutual Defense Treaties, Pacific bases	3. Strategic: -Encirclement and isolation - Asian Security Pact - African/Asian bases.
Support	From Soviet Union Mutual non-aggression pact Assumed nuclear support Industrial and technical assistance Military equipment and training	From United States/West No formal military agreements Implicit reliance on U.S. nuclear protection
		Treaty with Japan Trade with West Selective acquisition of modern weapons systems Explore coordination of military affairs w/West

Strategy	Anti-Imperialist People's War US is principal enemy "Lean to one side" & reliance on Soviet support in "peaceful coexistence"	United front against Superpowers in "Three Worlds" Soviet Union is principal enemy Transitional strategy - revolution & modernization
Pace of Military Modernization	Priority to basic economic development Program outlined in 10 Great Relationships Long range, slow paced weapons programs Compromise on priorities to selected military areas Rely on Soviet support during transition Defense industry tied to Soviet assistance	Priority to industry, agriculture and technology Program outlined in revised 10 Great Relationships Long range weapons program - due to economic constraints Priorities to selected military areas Open to Western economic, technological assistance Selected purchase of Western weapons systems No foreign influence in military doctrine or training.

To counter the American threat while protecting their domestic development program outlined by the 8th Party Congress, the Chinese turned to the Soviets for support. Despite initial Soviet reluctance to become involved in China's security affairs and the Chinese fear of losing their military independence to the Soviets, the Soviets provided support: the Mutual Friendship Treaty, industrial loans, educational assistance, and a military assistance program complete with weapons transfers and advisors.⁵ Perhaps the most important form of Soviet assistance, in Chinese eyes, was the nuclear protection they felt they had gained against the U.S. The Chinese felt that nuclear support not only relieved them of their fear of direct U.S. attack but freed them to take the initiative for limited objectives. The extent of Soviet support came into serious question later during the Quemoy crisis: indeed this issue led to the unravelling of the Chinese-Soviet alliance. The point is that the Chinese needed the support of one superpower to offset the strategic threat of another superpower during a critical period of internal transition and economic development.

Under the protection of Soviet support the Chinese debated the issues of military development. The decisions of the 8th Party Congress rejected the recommendation of professionals on the General Staff for a "quick fix" in weapons procurement in favor of the position of the Ministry

of National Defense, which favored long-run defense development tied to general economic support. Party leaders did compromise on air defense and naval measures and, perhaps more important, military professionals were allowed to reorganize the PLA and prepare it to fight under modern conditions. These steps included the establishment of 13 Military Regions (MR's), reorganization of the military command, integration of defense industries, and the regularization of the Army under the influence of Soviet military style.

Current Chinese defense posture presents an ironic reversal of roles that underscores its consistency. The Chinese now claim that the principal threat to world peace and to China's security is "Soviet Socialist Imperialism" and from this Soviet imperialism come three types of military threat. Conventional--a conventional force estimated at 40 to 45 Soviet divisions is stationed along the border, concentrated against Manchuria and Mongolia, and backed by tactical and strategic rocket forces. Nuclear--the Soviets pose a general as well as limited nuclear threat against critical military and industrial targets. Encirclement--the Chinese claim that the Soviets are accelerating efforts to encircle and isolate China through a series of treaties and bases in Africa and Asia.

To counter this Soviet threat, the Chinese have turned to the West and the U.S.: the roles of 1956 have been reversed. Where the Soviets are now the principal threat to the stability China requires to carry out its ambitious development plans, the U.S., in Chinese eyes, is filling the role of principal protector and source of economic, if not yet military assistance. The U.S. in particular is seen by the Chinese as the strategic balancer to Soviet nuclear pressures, a proposition dramatically demonstrated by Teng's playing of his "American card" with his direction of the invasion of Vietnam after his visit to the U.S. In addition, the U.S. may well become the principal source of industrial and technological support for the Chinese. The Japanese and Western Europeans have laid the groundwork for this cooperation, the latter being especially active in the field of arms procurement and production.

As in 1956, the attitudes of the professionals again appear to influence military decisionmaking after a decade of radical influence. China's defense program is still largely undetermined but the general pattern of allocation decisions resembles the program of '56. Military development will follow, not lead, economic development, but certain areas will receive priority. The Chinese are open to foreign assistance even to the point of allowing

foreigners to influence the design of new defense industries. As in 1956, the Chinese appear to have rejected the arguments for a quick-fix, this time as a solution to the problem of immediate Soviet conventional threat on the northern border. Rather they appear to be choosing a long-range development program designed to make their military self-sufficient sometime before the end of the 20th century. In the meantime, the Chinese have turned to the West to provide economic, technical, and some military assistance and to offset the strategic threat of the Soviet Union during this period of transition and development.

Resource Management

Expansion of the Chinese strategic horizon is limited by extensive deficiencies in military capability and attempts to overcome deficiencies already have encountered serious difficulties in the management and allocation of necessary resources. Current assessments of China's modernization campaign tend to emphasize China's material deficiencies and the low priority of the military budget. In addition there are serious obstacles in policy, doctrine, and politics--the "software" side, in one analysts terms.⁶

Because of these various obstacles, assessments tend to downgrade China's ability to field fully operational modern forces in the foreseeable future. In one analyst's view, for the Chinese to reach conventionally accepted levels of nuclear and conventional deterrence would require massive transfers of the scale the U.S. provided allies in World War II Lend Lease.⁷

But caution is necessary in assessing Chinese liabilities. Despite the relatively low military budget, some analysts argue that the Chinese can use their budget much more efficiently to buy and develop weapons than either the U.S. or the USSR.⁸ A much smaller percentage of the Chinese budget is devoted to personnel and personnel support costs. Costs of weapons production do not include high contractor wage scales as they do in the U.S. Furthermore, China's centralized economy and decisionmaking structure permit the leadership to shift to military priorities if and when they should decide to do so. Finally, general infrastructure growth will immediately benefit early weapons development in basic areas of steel and alloys, electronics, transportation and mobility, and aircraft production, to name only a few areas. Therefore the following review of arguments against rapid military modernization, though strongly convincing, should be tempered with the caution that the Chinese probably have the capacity for more rapid development than current assessments recognize.

Self-reliance, the virtue the Chinese consider to be their greatest asset, ironically dictates against defense modernization. Despite new trade with the West, the Chinese have only softened, not abandoned, their rhetoric of self-reliance. China's self reliant attitude is most evident in defense production, where the Chinese stress indigenous production of combat equipment. After Soviet assistance in the '50's, the Chinese developed the capability to reproduce and modify the basic Soviet systems that they use today. But in critical areas such as armor and aircraft construction, this type of production has reached the limit of usefulness.

Probably more than any other factor, the attitude of self-reliance in developing nuclear weapons, has constrained the development of modern conventional weapons. The Chinese decision to build their own strategic force has heavily influenced defense decisionmaking since 1958. After the Chinese decided to accept the cost of research and development at the expense of expanded conventional capabilities in the 1960's, their next decision on expenditures came in the early 1970's over the question of serial production of MRBM's. The Chinese implemented their missile program at the expense of general purpose forces. Should the Chinese decide to expand their ICBM potential in a similar manner their next major decision will be over the cost of large-

scale ICBM production. This decision could well set back modernization of conventional forces for a third time.

China's poverty is often cited as the greatest obstacle to military modernization: even if military development should receive top priority in a quick fix, China cannot afford to buy or produce the modern weapons and equipment it needs to compete with the U.S. and USSR. Furthermore, China's military industry is limited. There are shortages in all the basic defense industries- steel, power, electronics, and transportation. The general logistical support system is outdated and needs practically to be rebuilt from the bottom up. The Army has serious technical and educational gaps throughout all ranks and branches of service, limiting its ability to absorb new weapon technology. Even if the Chinese should acquire new weapons on a massive scale, such as new antitank or air defense systems, these systems could not be put to immediate use but would await deployment until lower troop units' skill levels could be raised by massive new training programs. This inability to absorb current levels of Western arms technology on a massive scale is one of the reasons why Western analysts are puzzled over the apparently large Chinese purchase of British Harrier VSTOL aircraft.¹⁰ The Harrier is a highly sensitive craft that requires intensive pilot training and experience. Purchase and introduction of this craft into the Chinese inventory in large scale appears

anomalous in the otherwise cautious, balanced approach the Chinese thus far have taken toward weapons development.¹¹

A third economic obstacle is the high cost of technological development. This cost affects China's military development in two ways: first, the development of an indigenous style or method of systems analysis and engineering will require not only the introduction of new technology and ideas from abroad but a large, costly education and research development program. The production of a Chinese equivalent to unique national weapon systems such as the U.S. B-52 bomber or Trident submarine, or Soviet T-72 tank and Backfire bomber, requires new economic and technical bases. The second way technology costs affect China is through the high cost of serial production of important items, in particular, air and naval craft. Should the Chinese military scientific community develop more quickly than expected and make available new military technology, leadership will face the prohibitively high costs of mass production of sophisticated equipment.

Finally, there is a compelling theoretical argument against the success of China's military modernization efforts. The Chinese are so far behind both the U.S. and USSR that no matter how much progress they make the other two will continue to progress as well, and the Chinese can never catch up. One observer has described this problem in terms

of Zeno's Paradox--if the one who is behind catches up half-way with each step, he will never catch up.¹¹ This is especially true if the competition continues to move ahead.

The question therefore is: if the Chinese cannot catch up, why make the effort? The traditional Maoist answer to the question should be obvious. Military capabilities are only one part of a nation's strategic capability. The nation must provide sufficient force and capability to defend itself while using other means to advance its objectives. As military capabilities change, the importance of other strategic means change as well. Therefore, Chinese military modernization will continue in order to provide adequate defense and to support China's strategic objectives as they develop.

Internal Change

The massive technical efforts required by full scale military modernization must be based on stable, long-term plans that clearly identify goals and can assume a steady flow of technical personnel and material. The political dissension of the past 20 years has seriously hindered China's ability to provide such stability. The impact of dissension within military ranks is a difficult factor to gauge in estimating an army's capability. But the uniquely political character of the Chinese army makes it a factor to consider. This is true if for no other reason than the

fact that the Chinese now stress the critical importance of military reform and rectification. Current Chinese statements on military modernization invariably address the serious damage caused by the Gang of Four and the radicals and by Lin Piao before them. In fact, the vast majority of current literature, articles in the People's Daily Liberation Army Daily and in broadcasts, addresses internal problems of reform, Party-Army relations, discipline, and training. Nationalist Chinese analysts also stress the political and doctrinal obstacles to PRC military modernization. Their conclusion is that the PLA reached its military peak by 1960 and has not been able to progress much beyond that level because of Mao's military theories and the political chaos generated by internal factional struggle--also a result of Mao's political theories.¹²

The probability that China will develop a modern military force has raised important questions about the limitation of current doctrine. Doctrine determines the application of military force and is developed according to a nation's military leaderships' concept of capabilities and perceptions of the overall situation. Changes in capabilities and perceptions certainly will affect doctrine. Chinese doctrine, since the revolution, has been based on the Maoist concept of People's War, a doctrine which, in theory at least, appears well suited to Chinese capabili-

ties and perceptions of the world situation. Operating from a position of weakness against threats from the superpowers, People's War exploits Chinese strengths--vast terrain, massive population, the Party's ability to mobilize and control this population--to tailor military forces and their application in a world that it perceives to be essentially revolutionary.

Modernization of military forces poses two problems of doctrine, both essentially political in nature. The first problem is the relationship between doctrine and political power. The second concerns the problem of troop morale and motivation. First, the political problem: measures required to implement and support different strategic positions or tactical doctrines have created political tensions among the Chinese leadership. This was especially true of the military debate immediately preceding the Cultural Revolution. A Red Guard criticism of Lo Jui-ch'ing simply but dramatically demonstrated the point. Lo's forward defense strategy required "killing the enemy at a distance or at his bases but this requires technology and emphasis on a technology which is bourgeois" (and thus politically unacceptable).¹³ Simply interpreted, the professional advice of the military leaders ran contrary to political axioms. Politics as much as military expertise has determined Chinese doctrine.

China's apparent commitment to new political direction, while reflected in discussions of military doctrine, is balanced by caution purely military in nature. The Chinese recognize the dangers of openly challenging present doctrine or making sudden changes in military operational methods because openly challenging People's War Doctrine would raise questions about the adequacy of the regime to defend the country.¹⁴ The questioning would be especially acute among troops told that current levels of equipment and training are inadequate to meet Soviet or American threats and that People's War methods will not save the country. Yet without a shift in doctrine to support the new capabilities that will begin to come on line in the mid-to-late 80's, Chinese forces will not be able to deploy effectively or efficiently. Thus the Chinese problem is to change its Army's real capabilities while making it appear that traditional Maoist doctrine supports the measures required for change. The Chinese appear to be doing this now and as long as the modernization is gradual, continued public adherence to principles of People's War can cover real shifts in doctrine. Rapid changes would be difficult to reconcile with traditional Maoist doctrine.¹⁵

The greatest challenge to modernization and the shift away from People's War Doctrine has come from the older

cadres steeped in Mao's conservative revolutionary tradition. On the leadership level, the attitude of such cadre has affected national policy in a dangerous way. As William Whitson has argued, these cadres suffer from an "amateurish" outlook on modern war, a holdover from the Long March days. This outlook tends to neglect cautious advice from military professionals who appreciate the limits to China's modern warmaking capabilities.¹⁶ This attitude is further reflected among lower level cadre who see change in technology and training as threats to proven means of motivating troops. One old infantry cadre objected to the introduction of armored personnel carriers into his unit because they would "dampen the fighting spirit of the men."¹⁷

Such an attitude evokes memories of Mahan's objection to new battleships coming on line at the turn of the century because their ability to engage the enemy at long ranges would create in the sailor "the indisposition to close."¹⁸ This comparison is instructive because changes in equipment and weapons, although they altered the fighting man's relation to his weapon or weapon system in the 19th and 20th centuries, did not destroy his "stomach for the fight." But they did provide a major impetus to changes in society as soldiers in mass armies adapted to modern machines and control systems.

This process is at the heart of China's current military modernization problem. Liu Shao-chi proposed to resolve the problem of red vs. expert in the mid-50's through the classic Marxist process of adapting men to machines. While the army adopted modern Soviet weapons and military procedures, masses of peasant soldiers would be exposed to the demands of modern machinery and discipline and thus gradually develop proletarian attitudes. Mao and his radical supporters opposed this approach for reasons varying from the economic necessity of People's War Doctrine to personal political ambitions. But in the two years since Mao's death, it is apparent that the general return to the professional policies of the mid-50's will affect the military by forcing it to face the realities of the requirements for modern war.

CHAPTER III

INFLUENCES ON CHINESE STRATEGY

The obstacles to China's military modernization dictate against its assumption of a forward looking or offensively oriented, strategic position, yet Chinese actions and statements increasingly point in this direction. Clues to how the Chinese can assume such an apparently contradictory position can be found by examining the primary influences on Chinese strategic behavior, namely traditional and communist patterns of strategic decisionmaking. In addition, the pattern of Chinese military decision since 1950 offers concrete examples of how the Chinese have responded to specific issues under specific conditions. The influences and implications of these sources of understanding Chinese strategic behavior are the subject of this chapter.

Traditional Influences

A characteristic of the Chinese, generally recognized but not fully appreciated by western analysts, is the way in which they are bound by tradition.¹ While an appreciation of traditional influences on strategy making is important, it is equally important to understand the complex manner in which tradition operates on the Chinese leadership.

There are two levels of tradition operating in Chinese communist decisionmaking. The first is the tradition of ancient history; the second is that of the modern communist revolution. In . the latter is a further distinction between approaches to revolution--the professional approach that emphasizes organization and control, and the more spontaneous approach of the radicals. Mao's radical approach which has guided Chinese communist party policymaking practically from its beginning, has become China's principle modern tradition and any attempts to break with it consistently have generated internal conflict.

The modernization program under the current regime is the latest, and certainly most important, attempt to break with Maoist tradition. Patterns of ancient strategic traditions are combining with Leninist operational principles to displace the Maoist tradition in the creation of new conditions for military and strategic development. In general, ancient tradition will tend to influence Chinese patterns of external risk while the Leninist principle will increasingly dominate the management of resources and internal political development. Furthermore, tradition and Leninism tend to be mutually reinforcing in their influence on strategic behavior, as illustrated in Table 2.

TABLE 2
COMPLEMENTING ELEMENTS OF CHINESE STRATEGY

<u>Traditional Element</u>	<u>Modern Communist</u>
<u>Three Kingdoms</u>	<u>Marxism</u>
Unity and central control from the national order of the Chinese world.	Historical inevitability of a unified utopian society.
Common principal - a single goal provides ethical and critical impetus to policy.	
<u>Sun Tzu</u>	<u>Leninism</u>
Comprehensive body of strategic and tactical principles.	Integrated strategy for the implementation of Marxist ideology.
Indirect approach	United Front
Deception	
Win without fighting	
Common principal - flexibility while retaining single goal, elimination of adversaries through calculated program of alliances.	
<u>Wei-ch'i</u>	<u>Maoism</u>
Integration of space and time while concentrating forces.	Integrated use of policy means in which military force is one element.
Living Situations	
Common principal - Dialectical interrelation of offense and defense tactical dispersion inherent to plan for strategic concentration.	

Thucydides Peloponnesian Wars, a classic of western strategic conflict,² has its counterpart in Chinese strategic thinking in The Romance of Three Kingdoms.³ Where Peloponnesian Wars portrays a multi-dimensional conflict between two powers, the theme of the Three Kingdoms is a struggle among three contenders. The central problem addressed in the romance is the conduct of strategy from a position of weakness--the principal protagonist attempts to preserve itself and then expand through precarious switching of alliances between its two more powerful adversaries. The application of this historical paradigm to China's current strategic position between the U.S. and USSR should be evident.

The counterpart to Clausewitz in Chinese military thought, of course, is Sun Tzu whose compact writings stress the integration of all aspects of society into a comprehensive strategy for the conduct of war. These writings have formed the operational principles of Chinese campaigns for centuries, including the campaigns of the Three Kingdoms strategists. Sun Tzu's central strategic principle is to win without fighting. Proper planning, training, and maneuver should allow a commander to manipulate his enemy into a position where the enemy not only recognizes the hopelessness of his situation but sees that surrender is in his own best interests.

The third traditional element in Chinese strategy is the concept of space found in the game of Weich'i (or Go). Weich'i is the oriental equivalent of chess, originated in China and popularly adopted in Japan. A game of subtle maneuver, its objective is not to capture enemy pieces but to dominate space and render the opponent ineffective while preserving one's own position and maintaining progress. The interaction of widely dispersed pieces on the board creates almost imperceptible connection between local tactical engagements and the overall strategy. This operational pattern is one of apparent dispersion and inactivity while concealing preparation to concentrate forces for sudden, decisive offensive moves. When applied in a real world situation, this operative pattern also incorporates time to create an even more complex strategic situation. The ideal of Weich'i play is to create a "living situation," one in which a player achieves a tactical breakthrough allowing him to begin to implement his strategic plan.⁴

This Weich'i objective - to create a "living situation" on the game board - when considered along with the dialectical nature of defense and offense in Mao's military thought, provides perhaps the most significant clue to how the Chinese approach the problem of defense and offense.⁵ Mao's military doctrine is succinctly summarized--

avoid the enemy's strength, exploit his weaknesses, preserve one's self, and destroy the enemy. The Chinese, in applying these principles through the doctrine of People's War over the past three decades have determined that they must be prepared to conduct a protracted war with inferior equipment and military skills. Protracted war integrates political, psychological, economic, and diplomatic factors with military tactics and strategy. In fighting a People's War, timing becomes critical because an inferior force should attack when it finds the opportunity and expects success.⁶

This fact is important in view of the fundamental Marxist principle behind Mao's statement that "strategically we must be on the defensive but our defense must be active, not passive." The strategic implication of this position is seen in a recent Chinese statement:

This line of active defense, enunciated by Chairman Mao, penetratingly and vividly embodied the objective dialectics of the interdependence and mutual transformation under given conditions between defense and offense.

Loosely interpreted this statement means to strike and destroy the enemy when the proper opportunity presents itself. And this opportunity will develop when, in Mao's terms, the Chinese

strengthen ourselves, gradually alter the general balance of strength between the enemy and ourselves, so as to turn strategic defense into strategic offense and completely vanquish the enemy.

Of the five types of warfare considered in Chinese doctrine--surprise strategic attack, conventional armed invasion, special warfare (chemical or biological), both strategic and tactical in nature, insurgency and limited war--the Chinese at present lack the military capability to conduct credible offensive operations in any but the last two categories. And of these two types of warfare there is a distinct difference in preference between the radicals and professionals: radicals tend to promote insurgencies while professionals tend to prepare for limited war. However, leaders of both sides accept what passes as Mao's dialectical principle of interaction between offense and defense, which means that when China gains the military capability and conditions permit, it will shift to offensive deployments capable of conducting the first three types of war. More significantly for the short run, this also means that Chinese have the potential to use insurgency or limited warfare to contribute to their overall goal of achieving strategic offensive capabilities.

The dialectical conjunction of defense and offense links the question of strategic orientation to issues of limited tactical offensives. Through the proper use of limited tactical offensives, along with measures to strengthen its capabilities, the weaker force can gradually turn the balance of power in its favor and gain the strategic offensive. Seen in this light, People's War assumes a less distinctly defensive characteristic. More importantly, this understanding of the nature of People's War can free analysts from preconceptions about the necessarily defensive nature of the doctrine and allow them to focus on the more important questions of how the Chinese analyze the factors determining the offensive or defensive orientation of a particular policy or issue.

While Mao's mass line style appears to have dominated Chinese policymaking, the Party's fundamental decisionmaking principle has been, and will continue to be, distinctly Leninist. China's fundamental strategic policy--operating from a position of weakness--is an issue Lenin addressed very early in his writings on imperialism. The roots of Chinese policy are deeply set in the guidelines for communist party operations in colonial areas established by the Communist International's Conference of the Toilers of the East held in 1921.

The leadership's Marxist interpretation of its particular stage of historical development, guides policy and assessment of the Party's relative strength to its enemy, determines action. The guide to practical action in implementing general policy then literally becomes the Party Line. Furthermore, in true Marxist fashion this process is dialectical, examining both sides of an issue in light of the historical conditions and then determining the proper course between them. Deviations from the proper course are condemned by Leninists as either too compromising (opportunistic and self-seeking) or too extreme (radical and ignorant of limitations). Errors in either direction can hinder or even destroy the Party's program.

The Strategic Debate

In military and defense matters, the two lines have lead to different military policies. The politically oriented or "Maoist" line in these issues is summarized in Mao's doctrine of People's War which fully integrates civilian and military aspects of policy. This position tends to the extreme of Lenin's category of left wing extremism, that is, it hinders development by pushing too fast, being too uncompromising in its revolutionary stance and too extreme in the insistence on military self-reliance. On the other hand, the professional line tends to favor a conventional view of war which distinctly differen-

tiates military from civilian aspects of war. This position further tends to the extremes of Lenin's right wing opportunism, that is, it hinders communist development by moving too slowly, being too willing to compromise with current conditions and too lenient in its acceptance of foreign military assistance.

The debate over the proper line in military affairs is inextricably bound to the general Chinese debate between "two lines". This correlation of military and general policy is the central thesis of Alice Hsieh's classic work on Chinese strategy, a work of refreshing relevance today almost 20 years after its publication. Of the initial defense debate after the communists consolidated their hold of the mainland in the mid-50's she wrote:

The 1955 debate within Chinese military circles on the future of China's military structure revealed how diversified and difficult were the tasks confronting China. It also demonstrated how alternate strategic preferences were interrelated with equally basic decisions affecting China's internal and external policies.⁹

While the debate's most dramatic impact has been on domestic politics, as evident from the volumes of material written about the Great Leap Forward, Cultural Revolution, and Gang of Four, its more elusive but perhaps more important impact has been on the determination of defense risks and allocation of military resources. The history of Chinese defense decision making in these areas shows

distinct periods of conflict and adjustment between the two sides of the debate. Table 3 reviews China's principal decisions and their contributing factors since 1950 while Table 4 offers a brief review of the policy shifts as they have occurred during this period.

It is the general thesis of this study that the status of the two line controversy determines to a large extent China's strategic policy and direction. As argued more fully in the concluding chapters, the internal consistency of each policy line allows for analytical connections between policy decisions in the different areas of defense decision making. To be specific, if one line dominates decision in domestic politics and defense resource allocation, it will, for the most part, dominate decisions of defense risk taking and general strategy.

This thesis of policy inference by 'line' is argued in the Rand Studies of William Whitson and K.C. Yeh. Whitson concentrates on the more purely military aspects of the debate while Yeh treats it in terms of defense allocation. Table 5 contains a detailed summary of Whitson's categorization of military issues and the position of each side of the debate on these issues. Yeh's list of issues forms the basis for the analytical discussion of China's current position found in Chapter Six.

While the scope of this study does not permit an in depth discussion of each of Whitson's categories they can

TABLE 3 : CHINA
REVIEW OF KEY POLICY DECISIONS AND MAJOR FACTORS¹⁰

<u>YEAR</u>	<u>DECISIONS</u>	<u>FACTORS</u>
1954	Improve conventional forces "People's War to expand people's liberation & mobilization"	Soviet assistance Response to lessons of Korean War
1956	Long run economic development - compromise between professionals & ideologues "Walking on two legs": Equal emphasis on regular force and militia	Soviet policy of peaceful coexistence Need to modernize economy
1957	Transitional strategy adopted - emphasis on nuclear weapons development & People's War to compensate for deficiency in conventional strength	Soviet ICBM Appreciation of U.S. nuclear threat Soviets unwilling to support over Quemoy issue
1959	Military shake-up Confirmation of "transitional" strategy	Confrontation with P'eng Teh-huai and military professionals
1962	Challenge to "transitional" strategy	Dilemma over U.S. policy of graduated response Success on Indian borders allayed commanders' fears over nuclear development strategy at expense of regular forces
1965	Main force units incorporated into political efforts Renewed emphasis on People's War	Rejected Lo Jui Ching's policy of forward defense & increased professionalism designed to meet U.S. threat
1968	Main force units removed from political activity to control of regional commanders	Professional reaction to radical excesses of GPCR Failure of Indonesian policy
1970-1972	Redeployment of Main Force units to North Manchurian strategy - point defense	Soviet buildup in Mongolia, Siberia, along border Limited, conventional threat

TABLE 3

REVIEW OF KEY POLICY DECISIONS AND MAJOR FACTORS (Con't)

<u>YEAR</u>	<u>DECISION</u>	<u>FACTORS</u>
1976	New stress on weapons, professionalism	Death of Mao, return of "Gang of Four" Continued response to Soviet threat New perceptions of global balance of power
1979	Policy review	Strategic uncertainty U.S. recognition Vietnam invasion

TABLE 4

SHIFTS IN CHINESE MILITARY POLICY SINCE 1953 ¹¹

<u>YEAR</u>	<u>POLICY</u>	<u>SITUATION</u>
1953-55	One line dominates	Emphasis on professionalism
1955-56	Conflict	Demand to accelerate modernization clash with demands to reduce military expenditures
1956-57	Accommodation	Continued modernization but at relatively protracted pace; increasing attention to politicization and domestic roles of PLA
1958	One line dominates	Emphasis on politicization to accompany Great Leap.
1959	Conflict	Objections to excessive politicization
1960-63	Accommodation	Under Lin Piao, attention to domestic roles of PLA, but continued protracted modernization and development of nuclear weapons
1964	One line dominates	Emphasis on domestic roles under "learn from PLA" campaign
1965	Conflict	Demands for crash program of defense preparation, including reduction in domestic activities of PLA, to counter American escalation in Vietnam
1966	Accommodation	Deeper involvement of PLA in domestic activities of Cultural Revolution begins, but precaution to reinforce defense and deterrence postures.
1967-69	One line dominates	Preoccupation with work, maintaining or restoring order.

TABLE 4
SHIFTS IN CHINESE MILITARY POLICY SINCE 1953 (Con't)

<u>YEAR</u>	<u>POLICY</u>	<u>SITUATION</u>
1969-71	Accommodation	Attempts to bring domestic & strategic roles into better balance
1971-76	Conflict	Development efforts halted by aftermath of Lin Piao and factional struggles for succession after Mao
1976-	One line dominates	Emphasis on professionalism, military skills or prerequisites for military modernization

TABLE 5

"TWO-LINES" - MILITARY POLICY, DOCTRINE, STRATEGY¹²

<u>ISSUE</u>	<u>MAO - PEOPLE'S WAR</u>	<u>PROFESSIONALS-CONVENTIONAL</u>
Military Goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Security of China primarily from <u>internal</u> political and <u>global</u> nuclear threats - Asian regional instability - Emphasis on global deterrent capability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Security of China primarily from <u>regional</u>, external modern military threat - Asian regional military stability - Emphasis on regional war-fighting capability
Priority of threat	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Global ideological threat - Individual initiative - Decentralized command - Ambiguous responsibility, dual roles - Broad staff guidance - Mission orders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Regional, external military threat - Corporate discipline - Centralized command - Clear division of responsibility - Thorough staff planning - Detailed order
Force Structure Organization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Forces for massive retaliatory deterrence - Dispersed conventional forces - Large militia, small standing army, small strategic rocket force - Crash nuclear program - Loose "guerilla" form - Simple rear services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Forces for graduated war-fighting response - Concentrated conventional forces - Balanced conventional, combined arms, modernization; minimal militia - Paced modernization - Regularized form - Modern military logistical system
Doctrine	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Large, politically reliable army, close to civilian society - Main force units closely integrated with regional and militia forces - Independent operations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Small professional army, distinct from society - Independent main force reinforced by regional forces and militia - Combined armed operations

Military Strategy

- Engage enemy close-in
 - Long range engagement
- Small unit operations
 - Large unit operations
- People's War
 - Conventional war with regular forces
- Global deterrent
 - Regional hostage and war-fighting strategy
- Emphasis on deterring enemy
 - Emphasis on preparing to defend against enemy
- "Lure enemy deep", defense in depth
 - Forward defensive strategy, hollow center
- War on Chinese territory
 - War on enemy territory
- Guerilla war of annihilation
 - Conventional war of attrition
- Protracted conflict
 - Quick resolution
- One strategic front(enemy) at a time
 - Battle on several fronts
- Force enemy to withdraw
 - Strategic pursuit beyond China's borders
- Focus on the longer-term psychological/ideological threat
 - Concentrate on immediate military/political threat
- Deception
 - Warfighting

be reduced to several manageable categories which form the basis for analysis of China's current military posture. The categories are listed below.

1. General Defense Strategy: Defense in depth vs. forward defense.
2. Nature of the threat: Long range (encirclement) vs. immediate (invasion).
3. Weapons systems: Strategic vs. general purpose.
4. Weapons development: Long run vs. quick fix.
5. Area orientation: Global vs. regional.
6. Force structure: Emphasis on militia irregular force vs. main force regulars.
7. Control structure: Central vs. regional control
8. Training emphasis: Political indoctrination vs. military skills.
9. Economic orientation: Self-reliance vs. foreign imports.

Before applying these categories of analysis to China's current defense posture, it is necessary first to examine what the Chinese have said and done about their military situation since embarking on their modernization drive.

CHAPTER IV

WHAT THE CHINESE SAY

In both word and deed since 1976, the Chinese have been laying the general basis for their new policy orientation. Conferences and public speeches on modernization and defense matters point to a new trend in the Chinese approach to the management of strategic risk, resource allocation and internal political change. Although information continues to be limited (the situation is getting better but China remains relatively closed to outside observers), the centralized controlled Chinese communist decisionmaking process lends itself to a certain economy of analysis.¹ Public statements emanating from national conferences conducted under the principles of democratic centralism (free debate until the issue is decided followed by ironclad obedience to the decision) provide fairly reliable clues to at least the Party's general policy line. The same principle is true for journal and news articles, broadcasts, and statements by public figures. They all follow the Party line and whatever differences may appear in them reflect the degree of debate or uncertainty allowed by the Party at that time.

Despite the appearance of dramatic change in China's ambitious campaign to modernize the country by the end of the century, this program is not new. Chinese leadership has been committed to the present program for modernization since Chou En-lai's Report on Government Work to the 4th National People's Congress (NPC) in January 1975.² The "four modernizations" slogan has been in popular use since the '60s³ but most important, the program is a return to the basic direction set by the Party in the mid-50's. The general outline for the current modernization effort is found in Mao's 1956 speech, On Ten Great Relationships. Economic and defense priorities are similar, and many of the chief architects of the 1956 policies have returned to power.

The program outlined in Ten Relationships represents Mao's balanced approach to China's problem of social and economic development. Its publication after Mao's death further represents a return to the more moderate side of Mao's policy line from the political excesses of the Cultural Revolution and the decade following. The speech recognizes the problems of organizing a large country for development and defense and establishes priorities among competing sectors of the economy, based on the Party's perceptions of the country's current stage of development. The principle decisions on priorities are to concentrate on

agriculture, to follow a program of general economic development (build the infrastructure before defense industries--defense industries should not lead economic development), and to concentrate on science and technology.

The overall direction and form of the current program developed through a series of national conferences that began after the coup to remove the Gang of Four at the end of 1976. Although an attempt to interpret the patterns of this development may be premature, it is important to review these events because of their importance to the development of Chinese military policy (a summary of major events and policy statements appears in Table 6).

There seem to be four stages in the overall development of the Party's modernization program: policy development, decision, implementation, and review. The development of the current line began with Chou's speech to the 4th NPC then fell victim to radical pressures during 1976 until the death of Mao in September. The general outline of the program re-emerged in December with the publication of Mao's speech and during the Second National Conference on Learning from Tachai in Agriculture.⁴ By March when the National Conference for Learning from Taching in Industry was held, new general economic development themes became quite apparent. The Party had shifted from the radical "politics first"

TABLE 6
SUMMARY OF MAJOR CONFERENCES AND STATEMENTS⁵

YEAR	CONFERENCES	STATEMENTS
1975	July - Enlarged meeting of Military Affairs Committee	Internal directives on military regularization
1976	10-27 Dec - 2nd National Conference on Learning from Ta Chai in agriculture. First outlines of modernization program.	
1977	Feb - Four national conferences on defense modernization: Air defense, arms production, military tech research, set direction for development	Jan - Theory Group of NDSTC: National defense related to economic development
	27 Apr-13 May - National Conference on Learning from Ta Ching in Industry: Run the country well, push economic development	Apr - <u>People's Daily</u> Editorial: Revolution and modernization, Lei Feng and 6th Hard Bone Company emulation campaigns, prepare for war
	16-21 July - 3rd Plenum of 10th Central Committee: Hua confirmed as Party and MAC chairman, Teng restored, Gang expelled.	May-Jun - <u>Liberation Army Daily</u> series on "10 shoulds and 10 should nots."
	Jul-Sep - Series of national conferences including Chinese Academy of Sciences and conference on foreign trade	Jul-Aug - Articles on old heroes, emphasis on PLA tradition
	12-18 Aug - 11th Party Congress: Confirmed new policies	1 Aug - 50th Anniversary of PLA: Hua and Yeh speeches outlining military policy, Mao's thought to lead military modernization.
		6 Aug - Su Yu <u>People's Daily</u> article
		Hua speech to Congress - key is class struggle, run the army well, push army building, prepare for war, take steps to modernize army.

YEAR	CONFERENCES	STATEMENTS
1978	18-23 Feb - 5th National People's Congress: Revised Constitution, 10 Year Plan for Economic Development (1976-1985)	Jan - Theory Group of NDSTC explain the overall policy of "millet plus rifles"
	7 Mar - 1st Session of 5th NPC Standing Committee	May - <u>Liberation Army Daily</u> announced conference on Lei Feng, 6th Company and First Air Division to be held in late winter or early spring.
	18-31 Mar - National Science Conference: 8 Year Outline Plan (78-85), stressed computer development, critical role of science to modernization.	June - Editorials on Army Conferences: revolution must command modernization.
	Large number of national, regional and provincial conferences following NPC	Teng Speech - themes of gang's purge, practice, modern conditions of war, cadre behavior.
	27 Apr-5 Jun - All Army Conference on Political Work, All Army Conference on Logistics	1 Aug - Speech by new Minister of National Defense, Hsu Hsiang-ch'ien outlining defense policy.
	Nov - Third National Conference on Air Defense; importance of tunnels, air defense as a continuation of People's War.	Yeh speech - emphasis on deterrence, prepare during peace-time, relation of air defense to national construction.
	Dec - 3rd Plenum of the 11th Central Committee	Jan - Broadcast of "Ku Mu Talks to Young Comrades on the Four Modernizations"

policy to emphasize order and economic development. There was to be revolution and modernization, people were to be red and expert, and although China would continue its policy of economic self-reliance it was now permissible to import necessary foreign goods and technology.⁶

The move to decision occurred during the summer of 1977 and ended with the 11th Party Congress in August. The Chinese style of decisionmaking--to determine policy and leadership changes first and then announce them in a Party Congress--indicates that the Party set policy during a series of conferences that summer, the most important being the 3rd Plenum of the 10th Central Committee in July. The plenum confirmed Hua Kuo feng as Chairman of both the Party and the Military Affairs Commission, restored Teng Hsiao-ping to his posts--including PLA Chief of Staff--and expelled the Gang of Four from the Party.⁷

The implementation of the program began with the 5th National People's Congress in February 1978. Again, it is the Chinese (and communist style) to take Party policy and give it to the State apparatus for implementation.

People's Congresses dramatize these policies as national events.⁸ Implementation continued through 1978 as practical programs were discussed during more conferences including the National Science Conference in March and two All-Army Conferences held from April to June.

It appears that China has entered a period of policy review. The 3rd Plenum of 11th Central Committee, during which the Party undoubtedly decided to normalize relations with the U.S. and to invade Vietnam, probably represents the first formal review of modernization policy. A January broadcast of remarks by Ku Mu to a young comrade on the force modernization may well reflect conclusions the Party reached during this Plenum. In the broadcast, Ku Mu admitted China's main difficulties were in science, agriculture, and economic management. Although science and technology are keys, the country is falling behind the industrialized nations. Agriculture is the foundation but it is weak. And economic management skills are inadequate to meet development needs. Despite these weaknesses, however, China's future is bright because the biggest obstacle to progress, the Gang of Four, is out of the way. Moreover, China is blessed with abundant natural resources. An already impressive industrial foundation, comparable to Japan's and Germany's in the 1950s, is complemented by a working class contingent both red and expert. Finally, China is rich in experience, both positive and negative, and the international situation favors China.⁹

Military Modernization

The program for military modernization has developed along the lines of the general program. As one analytical source said in citing Wei Kuo ching's description of the effort, the Chinese "are trying to combine revolution and modernization concepts into developing China's approach to military development. This approach is to take better weapons, training and education along with Mao's ideas on plain living and hard struggle and incorporate them into a modern army."¹⁰ The development of the current line on military modernization can be interpreted to follow the four stages of the general program.

The original outline for the military modernization program probably was determined in July 1975 during a secret, enlarged meeting of the Military Affairs Commission,¹¹ but was then suppressed through 1976 by the political troubles of the Gang of Four. The program resulting from the conference appeared to call for a more professional and regularized army. In addition firm Party leadership over the army should be restored, and specialized units should be increased.¹²

The concern over national defense was raised immediately after the removal of the Gang of Four. A major article in the People's Daily in January announced a new attitude toward military developments. National defense was indispensable, defense industry played a major role in economic development,

and the country needed to be self-reliant in arms production.¹³ Four major National Conferences in February probably were the heart of the development period and set the direction for the military program. These conferences covered air defense, arms production and military technology research.¹⁴ The evolving direction of the Party's internal control program appeared in an April editorial of the People's Daily which stressed the new themes of revolution and modernization and to prepare for war under modern conditions. It also outlined the reform and reorganization program for military units in the campaign to emulate Lei Feng and the 6th Hard Bone Company.¹⁵

The military program probably entered the decision stage sometime during the summer of 1977 before the 11th Congress. Beginning in May Liberation Army Daily published a ten-part series of articles which outlined the new policy of increased discipline, strengthened Party control, and reorganization of military units.¹⁶ A second collection of articles in July and August reflected the Party's attempt to legitimize pragmatic modernization steps in light of Chinese revolutionary military tradition. By highlighting old heroes of the revolution, neglected or suppressed since the Cultural Revolution, these articles made it clear that the Gang of Four had interfered with the proper development of the military and that modernization efforts were well within the "glorious tradition of the PLA."¹⁷

Finally, almost concurrent with the 11th Party Congress, Hua Kuo-feng and Yeh Chien-ying made speeches on defense policy for the 50th Anniversary of the PLA.¹⁸ These speeches were followed by a People's Daily article in which Su Yu outlined defense policy in three sections, the titles of which are instructive; development of People's War, the strategy and tactics of China's revolutionary wars, and oppose counter-revolutionary wars. Although the article stressed the need to modernize the PLA, it also pointed out that China's advantages in morale, social, political, and economic conditions, and geographic factors compensated for shortcomings in equipment.¹⁹

The beginning of the implementation stage was marked by the publication of an article by a group representing the National Defense Scientific and Technological Commission (NDSTC), the State Council's highest scientific organ. This article explained Mao's military concept of "millet plus rifles" as a valuable tradition which needed modification in light of the new context of modernization problems. In addition to rifles, China must add aircraft and cannon after procuring rifles and, finally, develop conventional and special weapons.²⁰ One specific example of the program was reported in an interview by Wang Chi-ching, head of the 4th Machine Ministry (Electronics) who described his goal to master the 1970's electronic technology of the West by 1985. This step would lead to more advanced developments later.²¹

Perhaps the strongest official recommendation for increased defense production efforts came from the National Science Conference in March. This Conference is significant for a number of reasons. It was the first science conference after the Party and National Congresses and it published an eight-year outline plan for science to complement the Ten Year Plan for Economic Development. Hua Kuo-feng attended the conference and in urgent terms delivered a speech that stressed the importance of the study of military science and technology for military men. Without technical knowledge, he said, commanders cannot organize and direct modern war.²² Finally the Conference concluded with the sober assessment that "if we fail in developing scientific techniques, all the talk about modernization of the economy and national defense will end in nothing."²³

Almost immediately following Hua's speech several broadcasts announced the opening of three senior service schools in Peking and the revision of training and education in the PLA. The missions of the schools (academies for military, political and logistics studies) were to train personnel from all services, stress joint operations, use sophisticated training aids, and participate in field exercises. Furthermore, comprehensive training programs throughout the PLA should be organized to carry out the tasks of retaining Mao's thought but relate it to modern conditions, determine modern combat requirements, formulate training programs,

study existing equipment and teach the necessary strategy, tactics, and skills for modern warfare. The PLA raised military study to a level of "strategic" importance, a step which points to the critical position of technical and strategic studies in the development of long range Chinese military programs. As a MAC Directive for Training published in May pointed out, the PLA must improve or fall behind the U.S. and USSR. This effort must be tied to the overall development of the economy while education and training are raised to the "strategic level."

Discussions on the problem of implementation probably were continued in two All-Army Conferences in May, one on political work, the other on logistics. The subjects of both conferences reflect not only the priority of Chinese military concerns but the level of problems on which they are currently capable of operating. Like education and training, which are of strategic importance to long range development, restoration of political control and the reorganization and development of a modern logistics system are necessary steps which the Chinese can afford to begin to take now. In a speech to the Conference, later printed in Peking Review, Teng Hsiao-ping stressed the importance of solving the current problem facing the PLA by discussing four tasks for PLA members. They must investigate the current situation and "seek truth from facts", realize that, while political work and tradition had not changed, times

- and conditions had, the PLA must completely purge remnants of the Gang of Four, and cadres must conduct themselves with exemplary behavior.²⁴

A review of the military modernization program probably began as early as May when the Liberation Army Daily announced a conference to be held in the winter (78) or the next spring (79) on the major campaign to emulate Lei Feng, the 6th Hard Bone Company and the First Air Division.²⁵ The purpose of this conference should be to review the steps taken to reform the PLA during the past two years as well as the pace of training and weapons development. Undoubtedly much of the conference activity will focus on lessons learned from the experiences of the Vietnam invasion.

Doctrine

Whether the Chinese have determined the orientation of their military development or not, they seem open to change in its application, if not actual change in doctrine itself. While discussions of doctrine in major publications stress the critical importance of Mao's military theory, they also indicate changes in its application. Almost apologetically, Yeh Chien-ying stated in a recent speech that the critical importance of proper military theory is still found in Mao. Yeh's point was that the inherent strength in China's military doctrine is its revolutionary character--in contrast to the inherent weaknesses of the fundamentally reactionary military theories of the U.S. and USSR.²⁶ Other articles have stressed the importance

of seeing Mao's military thought as a whole, not in isolated portions. One in particular reminded readers of the flexibility in the application of Mao's thought: there were times when Mao himself advocated three types of war--guerrilla, mobile, and positional.²⁷

The theme of current discussions on military doctrine or "line" has been "to conduct People's War under modern conditions". Under the policy line of revolution and modernization the Chinese leadership has generated several campaigns to promote pragmatic new development. Public statements explaining these campaigns stress four major themes. The first is the confusion caused by the Gang of Four who set back military development by adopting an attitude that training comes naturally and weapons training was a bourgeois practice. The second is that while soldiers must be trained and can learn much from veterans, veterans also must learn about warfare under new conditions. Third, soldiers and leaders must apply Mao's principles to complex new situations, be open, and be willing to experiment in new situations. And the fourth theme is that training is tough. "Skills are not easy to acquire--killing the enemy is not easy."²⁸

The new policy appears to aim at a balance between political and military skills. This objective is evident in the campaign to emulate the "6th Hard Bone" Company. In contrast to the "Good 8th Company" at Shanghai which was the model of political dedication until the fall of the Gang of

Four, the 6th Company is cited for its excellence in three areas: high standards of military skill, proper balance of politics and military matters, and courage to dare to be consistent in following the proper Mao military line.²⁹ This last characteristic is particularly important because it attempts to legitimize shifts to increased emphasis on military skills and regularized party and army control systems as a return to proper Maoist military practice in the first place. For example, one article cited the 6th Company for having the courage to challenge improper lines on three occasions; before 1964 when Lin Piao advocated a purely military line, after 1964 when Lin shifted to a policy that "politics is all", and during the period of the Gang of Four (73-77) when radicals argued that military skills training was a bourgeois trait.³⁰

Shifts in Doctrine. Chinese training doctrine, whether influenced by radicals or professionals, reflects a fine sensitivity for the relationship between attitude and performance. The radicals stress the importance of attitude for the development of skills while the professionals tend to emphasize the importance of the mastery of military skills to the development of proper attitude and high morale. Current policy, while officially balancing the issue with the slogan - promote revolution and skills - clearly seems to stress the primacy of skills in this equation. Articles stressing the need to improve training while retaining proper political guidance cite the importance of military skills in furthering revolution.

Military skills were needed in restoring order in Tibet and achieving the objectives of the war with India. Most important, military skills are necessary to combat the restoration of capitalism.³¹

Several recent articles cite the historical importance of military skills in revolutionary victories. One article discussed how the crucial battle of Tai Yuan in 1949 was won with bravery and skill.³² Another described the extensive preparation for a major river crossing after the battle of Huai-Hai, also in 1949.³³ The troops first discussed why they were fighting and fully understood the importance of their mission. In the actual training for the crossing the soldier's motivation sustained them through difficult preparations.

There also have been some discussion of change in tactical doctrine itself. For example, in a call for a re-evaluation of current tactics, a recent article advocated a more aggressive tactical doctrine against armor. Citing Mao's principle to destroy the enemy force, the article argued that Mao's principle now dictates an anti-armor policy because tanks and mechanized vehicles are in fact the enemy. Therefore, the Chinese Army must have modern anti-tank weapons and develop new tactics for them.³⁴

The emerging importance of Manchurian industrial cities is forcing the Chinese to face serious questions over the advisability of "luring deep" in that strategic area. The northern cities and their garrison units may become the pivot points of a Chinese defense strategy that will lead to abandonment of People's War. One article discussed the "Stalingrad" strategy of turning the cities into defensive points around which offensives will develop to destroy the invading enemy.³⁵

Summary

As the professionals expand their control over Chinese policy, it is evident that military doctrine will change. The Chinese problem is how much to change. In terms of training, their problem is to balance the political indoctrination required to support the sacrifices of People's War with the technical training required to operate new weapons and command and control systems as they come on line. Yet, as long as China's military development is technically and economically constrained, People's War will be necessary, and this fact may present China's military leadership with an interesting problem. While the military professionals are limited to improvements in a few selected sectors in the short run, their views on areas (such as training and discipline) that do not require diversion of immense resources have been accepted without reservation.³⁶

This may well lead to a situation in which the Army is trained to fight with equipment it has not received, which in turn could generate pressures to alter production priorities in the modernization program. The professional line seems dominant. Whether this predominance results in new priorities to weapons is not as important as the fact that doctrine no longer slows down weapons development but stimulates it.

CHAPTER V

CHINESE MILITARY CAPABILITIES

From examination of China's modernization problems, its sources of strategy, and policy statements, this study now turns to the central question of China's military posture. What are the Chinese doing? What are their current military capabilities and what are they doing to improve them?

A nation's military posture can be assessed according to three standard categories--current forces, production capabilities and research and development efforts. Current capabilities provide the basis for estimating what a nation's military force can do at present and establishes the base for estimates of future capabilities. Programs for production and purchases of arms and equipment reflect decisions already made about the allocation of resources for military purposes. As such, they provide strong indications of the types of military force a nation will field, at least in the near future. Research and development efforts reflect a commitment, however tenuous, to future allocation of resources. Examinations of R&D efforts serve to illuminate military posture in other ways--by defining the probable parameters of future debates over weapons and indicating areas where R&D will serve to complement production efforts. This last

factor also highlights China's unique position as a major international actor with limited military capabilities.

Like other third world countries, China must selectively complement its current forces and production capabilities with foreign weapons it can buy ready made. Therefore, interests shown in foreign purchases are included under the general category of R&D.

Current Capabilities

The standard assessment of China's military posture is that it has a large armed force with limited capabilities. From this assessment stems two major estimates--China is capable of a successful strategic defense at extremely high cost to its populace and can conduct limited operations beyond its borders for well defined objectives. The fundamental premise behind this standard assessment is the low level of Chinese arms and equipment which are based on 1950s Soviet technology and have reached their effective limits. In addition, Chinese readiness is at an extremely low level as attested to by foreign observers and the Chinese themselves.¹

There are compelling reasons, drawn from both defensive and offensive considerations, which drive China's efforts to build a modern army. Defensively, the strategic doctrine of People's War requires a mass mobilization which will become increasingly difficult to generate as the economy

develops and industries expand, especially in the critical areas of northern China and Manchuria. Offensively, the exercise of diplomatic initiative requires capabilities to meet possible military opposition in limited or selected areas beyond the borders. In light of both of these considerations, China's invasion of Vietnam can be seen as a test of the limits of its current capabilities and a possible demonstration to opponents of change within the PLA of the need for military modernization.

Since 1973, the Chinese have concentrated their conventional air and ground forces in the north to defend Manchuria and the Northwest approaches to Peking. Sixty percent of Main Force units are in the north, while 30% are deployed to the south and 10% occupy Central China.² This assessment does not take into account the southern buildup for the invasion of Vietnam. These forces were reported shifted from the coastal areas opposite Taiwan but there have been no indications of what the Chinese have done with them after their withdrawal from Vietnam.

A number of developments indicate a strong program of defense building in the north. These developments can be interpreted as supporting a more forward oriented defense strategy than before and a shift away from complete reliance of the strategy of "luring deep" and trading space for time. While the Chinese have built strong anti-tank defense positions in Manchuria, perhaps the most important indicator of

Chinese defensive strategy in the north has been the expansion of the Regional Forces Command. Regional Force garrison units appear to be deployed to conduct a line defense against a Soviet invasion. This expansion and deployment can be interpreted in light of the current discussion in Chinese defense doctrine to improve regional forces defensive capabilities in order to free main force units for maneuver against invading armor units. Such a deployment pattern is consistent with the defense picture portrayed by the new Minister of National Defense, Hsu Hsiang-chien, in his Army Day speech in August 1978.³

In response to the Soviet armor threat, the Chinese logically have shifted the preponderance of their armored forces to the north and at the same time are apparently attempting to upgrade the armor capabilities of Main Force infantry units. Following the Soviet pattern this would mean adding battalions to the armor regiments and replacing trucks with armored personnel carriers. Increased armor capability is also complemented by efforts to improve army mobility both on the ground and in the air.

As indicated by the impressive volume of artillery fire supporting the Vietnam invasion,⁴ the Chinese have been following a general program to upgrade the Army's firepower. This program has improved capabilities by expanding the number of pieces in division support battalions and by increasing the caliber of unit weapons.

In terms of priorities of equipment, money, and talent, the Air Force has been the prima donna of the PLA. Despite its implication in the Lin Pao Affairs through its top leaders, the Air Force continues to receive high priority. But, of all the services, it is most seriously up against the limits of its current capabilities. The demands of air defense and close air support on the modern battlefield require technological breakthroughs the Chinese are working hard on but have not yet achieved. Therefore, Chinese air forces appear to be at a point of transition. With a large force which has expanded steadily since the 1950s within the capabilities of Soviet technology of that period, the Chinese now face the problem of developing new aircraft technology in order to meet the requirements for modern air warfare. There have been no real technological innovations or improvements in the past decade and this deficiency now appears to be a concern of high priority.

Until the Chinese can resolve the problem, and it appears that it will be at least five to ten years before they can deploy a new capability, they will continue to try to improve the efficiency of their current forces through a variety of measures. Although current projections of air force developments are unclear, there are a number of areas in which the Chinese appear to be making changes in deployment and training. The most important are cross training for air defense and close air support, and intensified

training in joint operations and close air support (CAS) measures. The Chinese have shown little interest in improving the capabilities of their bomber or reconnaissance forces insofar as new aircraft are concerned. The bomber force of Beagles and Badgers is considered obsolete but capable of a marginal, regional strategic threat, and is projected to expand at a modest rate.

The Chinese consistently have given high priority to air defense since the Korean War. This is one area in which Mao's supporters compromised with the professionals in 1955 and again in 1965 during the Lo Juo-ching debate. In the three air defense categories, air-to-air, surface-to-air, and anti-aircraft artillery, the Chinese are strongest in their SAM's and weakest in AAM, while they have worked consistently to improve their AAA. Although intelligence estimates expect the Chinese to develop improved AAM systems, there have been few indications of efforts to produce them. Despite trends in aircraft deployment and production which could be interpreted as leading away from the traditional concern of air defense (as opposed to combat support) the preponderance of Chinese aircraft remain devoted to air defense missions.

Supporting the SAM system is a wide variety of radar, the best of which is the surprisingly sophisticated space-tracking and ballistic missile early warning (BMEW) radar systems. On the lower altitude levels of radar coverage,

the Chinese are particularly deficient and they are extremely vulnerable to low level mass air attacks. Correspondingly, Chinese command, control, and communication cannot respond to a modern high speed air attack. As a result, the Chinese appear to be making strong efforts to improve their air defense command and control.

Anti-aircraft artillery is yet another weapons area in which the Chinese have made steady improvements in conventional capabilities. They continue to deploy AAA in traditional patterns of simultaneous coverage of military units and urban area while in Main Force divisions there is an apparent effort to expand AAA capability from a battalion to a regiment and to upgrade weapons. An interesting training development, further indicating the Chinese penchant for making do with what they have is the apparent cross-training of AAA units in anti-tank roles. It is estimated that an increased allocation of AAA weapons along with this new anti-tank role would contribute significantly to the firepower of regular infantry divisions. This move is typical of Chinese efforts to get the most of their current capabilities.

The Navy is perhaps China's most technically oriented service: its expansion and development since 1950 certainly has been the most dramatic. According to Jane's Fighting Ships, 1978, China's steady building program in modern shipyards and advanced nuclear and missile capability will make the Chinese Navy an important element in

the power balance east of Suez.⁵ This cautious assessment of China's naval potential reflects the current state of Chinese naval developments. While the Chinese have made strong progress in coastal patrol and missile craft with their expansion of the Ossa program and introduction of the Hai Dau missile boat, there are still serious technical and financial limits to the building of larger ships. For example, the indigenously produced new Luta class destroyer resumed serial production in 1977 after a delay of five years (although other combatant construction did not lag during that period). The size, composition, and pace of construction of the Chinese Navy indicates a development pattern similar to the other services: the Chinese have reached a state in which they must make significant breakthroughs in development in order to begin to match the technical capabilities of their superpower rivals.

The Chinese Navy also appears to be shifting and expanding its deployments to exploit its forces more effectively. Forward deployment of bases to coastlines, strengthening forces on Hainan, and at bases south of Taiwan Straits give the Chinese greater flexibility and ability to maneuver. Such developments will enable the Chinese to extend farther out the defense of their coast (to parallel development to forward defense on land) and to extend the limits of potential offensive operations. The presence of a permanent

support installation in the South along with operational submarines also gives the Chinese some new ability to patrol the southern end of the Taiwan Strait.

The medium range ballistic missile (MRBM) is the cornerstone of China's "poor man's triad." (The other two legs are the strategic defense in depth of People's War and the bomber forces.) The MRBM program ultimately relies on mobility and concealment to assure a second strike capability. Chinese bomber forces generally are considered obsolete and not to present a serious threat to the Soviet Union. They do, however, pose a credible threat to potential adversaries with less sophisticated air defenses and could be used in support of limited strategic operations (an interesting test of this theory would have been a large scale attack on Hanoi during the recent invasion). The bulk of the deterrent burden therefore lies squarely on the MRBM force. These forces are well dispersed and concealed. The quality of missiles is being upgraded and the pace of crew training, especially in mobile operations can be expected to increase.

China's strategic force is an independent arm with the mission of regional deterrence and support for theater operations. The most significant strategic development in China, however, has been the resumption of ballistic tests of the CSS-X-4 in September 1977 (after a 53 month delay). This

effort indicates that the Chinese have decided to go ahead with their plans to deploy an ICBM and thus be capable of threatening the U.S. for the first time. Intelligence analysis estimates that the Chinese ICBM can be operational by 1980.

China's strategic submarine program appears to be stalled and strategic submarines cannot be considered in the current inventory of capabilities. The possession of two missile launching subs, does however, provide the Chinese with the potential to develop this capability, however limited, in the future.

Purchase and Production

To meet the ambitious goals of acquiring 1970s military technology by the mid-80s, China must purchase or produce weapons and equipment of this level of sophistication. Chinese purchases of foreign weapon systems appear to serve two purposes--to acquire prototypes for later indigenous production and to buy military systems which will fill present defense gaps. The Spey jet engine purchase is an example of the first type as the Chinese appear to be organizing major production and test facilities around this purchase. The nearly completed purchase agreement for the British Harrier can be seen as an example of the latter type. China's military production capability, in general, has reached the limits of its effectiveness and the central problem is to develop the ability to produce their own

weapons of indigenous design. This development requires a breakthrough in technology, as well as a large scale of technology transfers neither of which China can presently afford or absorb.

Despite the formidable obstacles to this production task, there are strengths inherent in China's defense system which analysts should not overlook. First of all, China devotes a higher percentage of its GNP to defense than do the U.S. and the USSR. Secondly, China does have an extensive defense industry on which to build.⁶ Therefore, the two stage program of foreign prototype acquisition and indigenous follow-on production has a respectable starting point. Meanwhile, the Chinese now appear to place the priority of current production on aircraft support systems, defense naval capabilities, and strategic systems. Foreign assistance will tie together current productions and future capabilities and in this area, the Chinese display traditional acumen and simple third world common sense by avoiding single supplier problems. Their aircraft industry is oriented on British assistance, shipbuilding logically falls to the Japanese, and for strategic support systems--satellite surveillance and communication equipment--the Chinese have looked to the U.S.

This pattern of production and development is most apparent in the aerospace industry, where the Chinese have

been most active because their air defense needs are the most urgent. China's requirements for modern technology in general also give the aerospace industry a logical priority for purchases and development of technology. This industry, in effect, can lead both general economic development and the expansion of defense industries. The Chinese approach to aerospace development appears to be evolving along the following three-part pattern: some purchase of hardware or aircraft, acquisition of extensive support systems, and employment of foreign support personnel until China is self sufficient. Thus far this approach seems to be following a two-stage plan: in the first stage foreign advisors provide technical assistance in setting up testing and production facilities, as the British are doing with the Spey engine in Hsi-an. The second stage of full scale production will come after the Chinese have built up their core industries with Japanese assistance.

The principal Chinese attempt to develop new aircraft, the Shenyang F-9, reflects the apparent Chinese effort to maximize the efficiency of their capabilities while developing a new aircraft. The F-9, a Chinese adaptation of the MIG-21, is designed for the ground attack mission but has interceptor capabilities. The F-9's position in the Chinese air force is instructive because it is their most advanced fighter and the most unreliable. In contrast, the older

MIG-17s and MIG-19s are more reliable but less capable.

Until the Chinese can resolve the production and design problem of a modern aircraft, perhaps in their work on a multi-purpose aircraft (MPA), they are forced to rely on capable but obsolete equipment.

In addition to fighter aircraft, the Chinese aircraft program covers the range from light helicopters to large transports. They have made limited purchases of the German BO-105 light helicopter and the French Super-Frelon. Light transport aircraft acquisition include the purchase of the Twin Otter from Canada and indigenous production of a small passenger craft similar to the Australian NOMAD. In addition to the major purchases of jet engines and Harriers from the British, the Chinese have shown great interest in the British-French C-160 Transall, although the U.S. C-130 appears to be even more attractive to the Chinese as a military transport. Finally, the Chinese continue to purchase limited amounts of equipment from the Soviets. In last year's annual trade agreement they acquired medium and heavy helicopters and a number of AN-12 Curl transports.

Like the aerospace industry, China's shipbuilding industry is a logical choice for modernization priority. Its expansion can mutually serve general and defense production requirements. A recent agreement with Japanese industry will help to reorganize China's atomized shipbuilding facilities by modernizing and streamlining facilities. This step

should help the Chinese in two ways. First it will permit them to exploit fully their presently underutilized civilian production facilities but more importantly for the Navy, improvements will allow them to upgrade and increase military shipbuilding which is already at full capacity. Two recent developments indicate the Chinese intention to continue gradual naval expansion--the resumption of LUTA-class destroyer production and the second purchase of 16 Super-Frelon helicopters for maritime use.

China's strategic situation does not require breakthroughs in naval technology with the same degree of urgency they do for the Air Force. As long as China maintains a defensive maritime posture and does not expand to blue water, the navy can improve capabilities within current levels of production. Where significant improvement is needed is in upgrading armament: SSM's, coastal missiles, maritime AAM's, and support equipment. But improvements of these systems can be drawn concurrently from air force and army developments.

Continued emphasis on the space effort is a third area in which China appears to be exploiting the mutually beneficial effects of development for civilian and military industry. Building on perhaps the more modern sector of their defense industry, Chinese efforts in this area have been most active in the purchase and production of support systems to include a wide range of electronic and high technology improvements.

While the Chinese have shown great interest in a number of anti-tank and anti-air defense systems, they have yet to make any significant purchases of equipment. Nor does there appear to be any increase in production rates. For example, while the production of basic ground arms--artillery, APC's and tanks--continues at a steady rate, that rate is well below capacity. This fact may be due to the Chinese decision to hold off further production of old systems until they decide which system to produce and deploy to units.

Research and Development

While the Chinese have shown remarkable capabilities in many highly technical fields such as optics, lasers, and solid state electronics, their R&D effort in general has been disorganized, of inconsistent quality, and lacking in direction. Therefore, R&D efforts provide few substantial clues to the types of weapons the Chinese want to produce and, by inference, to their strategic directions. What is evident, however, is the fact that the Chinese are making serious efforts to consolidate and improve R&D. These efforts must be considered in the same category as the present strategic position of military education, i.e., as a critical preparatory step along the path of strategic development.

The Chinese have demonstrated the capability to develop improvements for their armor forces especially in optics and infrared devices. Additionally, they are probably engaged in the development of a new battle tank. They are reported to have developed prototypes and to have shown great interest in West Germany's Leopard tank. Other mechanized vehicles the Chinese have shown an interest in developing or purchasing include the BTR-60, the British Chieftan armored recovery vehicle and the Scimitar range of combat vehicles. The Chinese have demonstrated a basic capability for artillery improvements especially in rifling techniques. They have shown much interest in the improvement of fire control systems. Perhaps the most extensive and well publicized interest in foreign weapons acquisition and development has been in anti-tank guided munitions (ATGM). Some analysts, however, argue against the possibility that the Chinese will acquire and deploy large numbers of these weapons.⁷ Not only are they expensive but China's manpower advantages are better exploited by the mass production of improved crew-served weapons.

Western surface-to-air missile and anti-air artillery systems (ROLAND, Rapier, Milan) have been among the glamour weapons attracting the Chinese. Given the Chinese gaps in low level air defense, priority to such systems is logical.

The Chinese survey of Western interceptor aircraft along with the production of the Spey jet engine point to the probable development of China's first all-weather, low level interceptor by the late 80's. This aircraft would overcome another serious deficiency in China's air defense.

Chinese interest in aircraft development is evident in several areas besides fighter aircraft; a multipurpose combat aircraft, special purpose aircraft such as the Japanese ASW PS-1 aircraft, and a wide variety of transport aircraft from light carriers to the Boeing 747P. Other areas include the improvement of the Spey test and production facilities and the acquisition of the French ATAR jet engine.

The Naval hardware the Chinese have considered would support a limited expansion beyond their present coastal operations areas. Discussion of building foreign frigate types and interest in the Exocet ASM and Crotale AAM indicate a consideration of the capability to challenge large combat ships in open waters. Finally, despite apparent setbacks, the Chinese do continue to experiment with submarine missiles for both the G-class and Han submarines.

In assessing China's military posture and potential it is necessary to consider what weapons the Chinese have chosen not to produce or develop. Significantly, the Chinese have made no efforts to develop tactical ground missiles and there is no evidence of

interest in following the Soviets in the use of FROG missiles. Nor have the Chinese taken steps to develop a ground tactical nuclear capability either for heavy artillery or short-range, surface-to-surface missiles. Another area of ground support in which the Chinese have not begun to develop any capability is that of the attack helicopter, despite their apparent desire to increase ground force mobility. There is also no evidence of interest in developing helicopter support. They do have the capability to attach some armament to the medium and heavy helicopters recently purchased and may move to develop this capability in the near future.

Summary

Chinese military developments over the past two years generally reflect the official policy of paced modernization in defense matters and continue a relatively balanced approach to force development. The major trend of Chinese efforts still appears to be the improvement of combat efficiency within current levels of capabilities and technology while a program of new weapons purchases or development has yet to take shape. Lack of clear cut weapons development program is indication of unresolved debate.

Air and ground forces have concentrated on shifts in deployment, strengthening position defenses, and improving tactics, control, and training. The Chinese have shown

particular interest in three areas of tactical weapons-- anti-tank guns, armor, and air defense artillery. This interest stems from recent investigations of western military forces, traditional concerns over air attack, and assessment of the Soviet armor threat.

Naval forces have resumed a modernization program to upgrade their capabilities after a delay of several years. The focus of improvements remains the development and deployment of patrol and missile boats for coastal defense. While improvements continue within current capabilities, new deployment patterns and the potential for shipbuilding expansion indicate the capability to expand the Navy's operational capabilities on a gradual timetable.

The development of strategic missile forces remains a high priority. While the Chinese have continued their program to disperse and conceal MRBM's, perhaps the most significant strategic development is renewed interest in deploying an ICBM. The submarine missile program is still questionable and is only important insofar as it provides a basis for future development.

CHAPTER VI

CHINA'S MILITARY POSTURE ANALYSIS

From the review of major factors affecting China's strategic position has emerged a picture of China taking halting, but definite steps toward a military force capable of supporting great power status. After a twenty year hiatus, the Chinese appear to be back on a development track that will achieve the defense goals of the 1956 program. Although the 1956 program provides the principles for China's modernization drive, current conditions offer the Chinese greater opportunities for independent action than they did 20 years ago. Yet independence is potentially limiting because the Chinese must support their own strategic initiative and cannot now rely on anyone for assistance to the extent that they did on the Soviets in the 50's.

Despite their relative poverty and the internal disorder of the Cultural Revolution, the Chinese appear more confident than ever. This confidence is based on a realistic appraisal of their economic and military deficiencies. This new realism is drawn from lessons of past mistakes--over-reliance on the Soviets on the one hand and overly zealous pursuit of radical programs on the other. After 30 years of experience, the Party also seems to be maturing with the probable result that its hold over the country is stronger than ever. Further, China is now an independent nuclear power, however limited in capability, and after 20

years of high-priority development, China's strategic force provides a credible regional deterrent. It also has a global potential that will strengthen China's ability to manage its strategic risk-taking. A final factor, one on which the Chinese place great emphasis, is the loosely structured (and in their eyes, more revolutionary), world situation. For the Chinese there is no need to enlist the direct support of the U.S. against the Soviets: they only have to portray to the Soviets that the U.S. has shifted to their side. This subtle tactic risks further alienation of the Soviets, even to the point of their direct military intervention. As in the Three Kingdoms, the Chinese problem is threefold--how much to enlist U.S. support, how far to provoke the Soviets, and how much to rely on themselves.

The Chinese military program to support an independent policy position remains in flux, but the Chinese seem to have decided what their military forces and policy will not be. In terms of the "two lines" in military policy, the Chinese have rejected the radical excesses of People's War and seem to favor the professional approach to military development. The programs to restore discipline, order, and unity to the armed forces strongly reflect the attitude of men long associated with the professional side of the controversy. This is not to say that the Chinese have resolved the controversy between radical and professional approaches and that the Army is frozen into a new, static situation in

which the PLA will become a mirror image of the U.S. or Soviet armies. Rather, the situation is a dynamic one in which the Chinese are attempting to work out a new approach to defense policy under the rubric of "People's War under modern conditions". Chinese military policy is in an evident stage of transition from a "bad period", blamed on clearly identifiable political enemies of the Gang and their supporters, to a desired state of new capabilities. It is too early for the Chinese leaders to define this state clearly but they do recognize that it will require modern weapons and technology. How these will be used in terms of strategy, doctrine, and military ethics are questions for debate during the present transition.

That the debate continues is evident from the nature of the problem of Chinese limited military capabilities and from what the Chinese have said and done thus far. The problem is essentially one of balance--how to build up conventional capabilities and develop attendant doctrine to fight a modern war without losing the confidence and commitment of troops grounded in the less conventionally oriented doctrine of People's War. Chinese utterances indicate steps to prepare the army to pass through the transition from Maoist tradition to modern professionalism will be guided by a dual policy carefully defined by Party leadership.

China's attempts to achieve this balance are evident in measures taken thus far to shift policy on the major

defense issues introduced in Chapter III. The following is an analysis on China's current position on each of these issues.

General Defensive Strategy

The central defensive principle of Mao's People's War has been a defense in depth characterized by "luring the enemy deep" into Chinese territory. This policy has been challenged from the beginning by proponents of a forward defense that would preserve Chinese territory by "meeting the enemy beyond the gates." The invasion of Vietnam is an example of this policy and obviously demonstrated the fact that the Chinese presently are not restricted by a passive defensive doctrine..

With regard to the broader and more critical defensive front against the Soviet threat in the north, proponents of a forward strategy increasingly have objected to defense in depth on the grounds of the new value of Manchuria's industrial complexes. Defense policy enunciated in speeches like those of Hsu Hsiang-chien in 1978 or Su Yu in 1977 retain Maoist rhetoric of People's War and defense in depth but indicate a distinct shift toward a more active defense posture. This shift is further seen in the buildup of garrison divisions and discussions of defenses conducted around the strategic pivot points of major cities. Furthermore, the gradual expansion of conventional defensive measures,

such as the western and northern rail buildups and expansion of maritime and coastal defense capabilities, appear to be moving China's defensive lines forward, farther away from the Chinese heartland "within the gates."

Nature of the Threat

Both Chinese rhetoric and actions show a calculated ambiguity over ultimate strategic orientation and the nature of the greatest threat to China. Global strategic orientation is an option normally associated with revolutionary policy and public rhetoric continues to follow China's three-world view, a view increasingly focused on the Soviet threat. Likewise, China's recent diplomatic efforts in Eastern Europe and success in its U.S. policy reflect an impressive range and versatility of global options. The formal state-to-state nature of China's recent diplomatic behavior, however, indicates a continued shift away from the revolutionary policies associated with the radicals.

China's military actions, on the other hand, reflect a regional orientation associated with professional policies. The forward defensive buildup in the north and the limited invasion of Vietnam both show that China's

military leaders now tend to focus on conventional military means to support strategic objective. The conventional buildup in the north appears to be the Chinese choice of defense policy against the threat of a Soviet invasion along the lines of the Soviet Manchurian model, while the invasion of Vietnam demonstrates again (after Korea and India) the Chinese willingness to redress regional strategic positions with the calculated use of conventional force.

The apparent Chinese decision to review their ICBM program, however, should give pause to the interpretation that Chinese strategy is oriented on the Soviet regional threat. Long considered an indicator of Chinese strategic intentions, the deployment of an ICBM would give the Chinese the flexibility to challenge U.S. interests in the Pacific with deterrent support of the sort they failed to receive from the Soviets in 1958. The fact that the arguments for either a two-front strategy (against the Soviet and the U.S.) or a maritime strategy (against the U.S.) continue to surface further indicates the durability of the two-front issue in Chinese strategic planning.¹

Weapons Systems Priority

Which weapons to produce and at what pace are questions rooted in China's economic situation and ultimately reflect the differences between the two political orientations. Radicals have favored long-run development programs because they are less disruptive to the economy. They further have favored strategic weapons development because they can provide strategic support to far-flung revolutionary activities. Professionals, on the other hand, have argued for a quick-fix, short-term weapons acquisition programs to meet immediate military threats. They also argue a more conventionally Stalinist development line that defense production should lead rather than follow economic development.

The Chinese appear to be improving the efficiency of current capabilities while putting off difficult procurement and production decisions. The most difficult of these decisions, should the Chinese continue to develop a full range ICBM, will be over the allocation of funds for the production of new sophisticated, conventional systems they hope to produce during the next decade--multi-purpose aircraft, a new battle tank, air defense systems, and antitank weapons--and serial production of ICBMs in the same period. The Chinese probably can continue to expand their MRBM program at its present rate and still go ahead with the development of some sophisticated systems for the '80s. But

it is highly unlikely, under the publicly announced priorities of the current modernization program, that the Chinese can afford to develop new weapons and deploy an intercontinental strategic force.

Pace of Weapons Development

With the exception of air defense and aircraft production, including the curious potential purchase of the Harrier, the Chinese have made no apparent commitment to immediate purchase or production of any major new weapons system. Their development program appears well planned and will continue at a moderate pace of growth along with the economy in general. If the Chinese should decide on a quick fix, it probably would mean the expansion of now underutilized arms production capability at the expense of civilian economic development plans. The Chinese review of the Vietnam invasion probably will resolve questions of priorities and expansion of current capabilities.

Weapons production is debated on two levels. The first is the relative balance between the technically sophisticated Air Force and Navy on one hand and the less sophisticated Army ground forces on the other. The second is a degree of emphasis on regular forces and the militia within the army structure. On the first level, radical policy downplays the importance of the Air Force and Navy (but not the strategic nuclear forces), and regards as sufficient a relatively low level of sophistication required for passive defensive

activities. Professionals stress the development of these forces not only for their value in defending against highly sophisticated foreign threats but for their contribution to sophisticated defense industry as well. Public statements in broadcasts and newspapers clearly condemn the radicals for their interference with the expansion and modernization of the Navy. And this accusation is applied in general throughout the PLA.

Area Orientation and Force Structure

Although China's orientation against the Soviet ground threat increasingly assumes the character of a forward defense, its defense posture retains its essentially Maoist character and does not appear to be irrevocably committed to forward deployments. The current position of the militia reflects this apparent ambiguity. The militia's regularization clearly follows professional guidelines and assigns it the mission to reinforce Main Force units; it also prepares it to support a defense in depth as well. The results of the current PLA reorganization program favor professional policy which is to integrate the militia into the military missions of the PLA and divorce it from politics. The new constitution of the 5th National People's Conference states outright that the militia is no longer an equal force with the PLA. The militia also appears to be losing its position as the balance point in the

army's force structure as defensive policy gradually shifts from the defense in depth of People's War to a forward mobile defense. The new balance point of this strategy, at least in the north, appears to be the regional forces in the Garrison Divisions whose mission is to defend in place while Main Force units maneuver against attack echelons and the militia serve as a logistic force and general reserve.

Control Structure

The present balance between central and regional control of the PLA is difficult to assess. The relative lack of internal disorder, the holding of Party and State Congresses on schedule, and the impressive series of national and local level conferences on all aspects of modernization seem to indicate a relative balance of power under central Party control. The leadership coalition fashioned between Teng Hsiao-ping and Hua Kuo-feng appears to have gained the support of regional military leaders and the price of this support is reported to have been a return to a professional style army.² The coordination of the large scale invasion

of Vietnam also indicates regional acceptance of centralized control of the PLA, in contrast to the period immediately following the Cultural Revolution when regional commanders took command of military units and government organs in their areas and forced the central leaderships to curtail its radical policies.

A challenge to this apparent balance however, may develop over the weapons development issue. The regional commanders, in general, have tended to support general purpose forces development and regional MRBM's because they are more susceptible than strategic forces to decentralized control and such control enhances personal power.³ If the regional commanders feel that weapons development is proceeding too slowly to meet defense needs, they will be tempted to increase pressure on the central leadership to divert funds from the civilian economy and the strategic program. This problem is yet another issue to be addressed in the post-Vietnam invasion analysis. The fears of regional commanders over the army's ability to fight a conventional war were allayed by the success of the Indian invasion in 1962, thus allowing the central leadership the freedom to

develop their nuclear program.⁴ Commanders' reactions to the results of the Vietnam invasion will in like manner affect the direction of military modernization. If commanders are satisfied with the army's performance, they probably will allow central leadership to accelerate the strategic program. If not, then they will push for a buildup of general purpose forces more amenable to their local control and more applicable to local engagements.

Military Education and Training

The shift from the radical "politics first" position to professional pragmatism has been most evident in military training and education. Chinese leaders publicly call for preparation for war under modern conditions and these preparations stress both men and weapons. Reports of increased skill training in small units and expanded combined arms training and joint service exercises reinforce this public image. Further, this area is not fiscally constrained, and military professionals have been given a free hand to reform and reorganize the PLA in areas that do not require large transfer of funds.⁵

Chinese leadership has not embraced exclusively the professional line in training, as is evident from continuing public reminders of political training's importance in preparing for war. The low-level debate on this issue is

further indication of the balance between the two lines as Chinese leaders take a hard look at the military choices in front of them. They certainly are too cautious to burn their ideological bridges behind them in a development effort the direction of which is yet undetermined. Furthermore, the Chinese cannot easily discard the military ethic of a half-century. Thus, until the Chinese determine the direction of their military strategy and the type of force structure it will require, Mao's revolutionary and political ethic will continue to underwrite the public line of China's military development to some degree.

Economic Orientation

China's overall modernization program represents a break with the autarkic policies associated with the radicals.⁶ The Chinese have admitted that they cannot achieve their basic development goals without foreign trade or assistance in some form. They also have cautioned against an over-reliance on foreign trade and in rhetoric continue to stress the self-reliant nature of their foreign trade program. In short, the Chinese have opted for an outward-looking policy of self-reliance based on a balanced trade program rather than simple autarky. Already the ambitious programs outlined in the 5th National People's Congress are under review and the Chinese appear to be revising downward some of their trade and production goals.⁷

The Chinese have demonstrated more caution and more closely followed an autarkic line in their approach to developing the defense economy. Despite well publicized shopping trips to Western Europe and persistent speculation over U.S. arms deals with China, the Chinese have not shown any willingness to open themselves to dependence on foreign arms or arms production that they cannot control. This policy not only reflects China's independent attitude toward foreign arms but reflects a lesson learned from over-dependence on the Soviets through the 1950's. The Chinese will be cautious in opening the country to foreign trade and developing weapons based on foreign assistance or technology.

Summary and Review

Review of the categories of debate reveals a general trend toward stabilizing military policy under professional guidelines in some areas but continued indecision in others (see Tables 7 and 8). In general, the professional line dominates current economic policy, military training, and force structuring while radical influence remains evident in general defense posture, weapons production, and weapons development. Ambiguity and indecision is most apparent in issues of threat orientation, foreign policy, and balance of internal military control.

Despite this ambiguity and current lack of Chinese capability, the U.S. must appreciate two features of China's

TABLE 7

STATUS AND TRENDS OF CHINESE MILITARY DEBATE ISSUES

<u>ISSUE</u>	<u>STATUS</u>	<u>TREND</u>
Defensive Posture Forward Defense vs Defense in Depth	Defense in Depth	To Forward Defense
Policy Orientation Global vs Regional	Global Diplomacy Regional Military	Questionable
Threat Orientation Long Range vs Short Range	Balanced	Balanced
Weapons Production Nuclear vs Conventional	Nuclear	Undecided
Weapons Development Long Range vs Quick Fix	Long Range	Balanced
Force Structure Regular vs Militia	Regular	Regular
Training and Education Political vs Military Skills	Balanced	Military Skills
Combat Structure Central vs Regional	Balanced	Central
Economic Policy Autarky vs Foreign Trade	Foreign Trade	Balanced

TABLE 8
"TWO-LINES" - GENERAL REVIEW AND CURRENT ASSESSMENT 8

<u>ISSUE</u>	<u>PROFESSIONALS</u>	<u>RADICALS</u>	<u>CURRENT TREND</u>
Deterring Nuclear Attack			
Primary Enemy	U.S.	USSR	USSR but continued debate over "one or two enemy" issue
Deterrent Means	Soviet support	-Retaliation with conventional forces -People's War	-Independent, regional deterrent. Potential ICMB
Supplementary Measures	-Sino-Soviet rapprochment -Air defense	-Sino-Soviet rapprochement -Shelters, dispersal, conceal IRBM/MRBMs -Strategic retreat	-Exploitate perceptions of new relation with U.S. -Shelter, dispersal and air defense -preparation for forward defense
If Deterrence should fail	--		
<u>preparation for ground war</u>			
Total Forces	-Smaller	-Larger	-Larger
Force Structure	-Larger PLA, minimal militia	-Smaller PLA, very large militia	-Large PLA, regularization of relations among three levels of force
Navy	-Coastal defense	-Blue Water	-Apparent expansion of support for limited regional objectives

<u>ISSUE</u>	<u>PROFESSIONALS</u>	<u>RADICALS</u>	<u>CURRENT TREND</u>
Model PLA	-Highly disciplined, professionally heavily equipped w/modern weapons, modern logistics systems, Soviet model	- Indoctrinated revolution ary army, some modern wea pond, minimal logistic support required, pre-49 pattern of organization	-Tendency toward profess ional model while attempt ing to retain revolutionary ethic.
Command and Control	-Centralized command, unified control by military	-Decentralized control, dual control by Party and Army	-Trend to centralized control while stress on traditional dual control measures
<u>Army Building</u>			
Pace of Modernization	-Rapid modernization	-Paced modernization	-Paced modernization
Regularization	-Military ranks, differential pay, distinction between army and society	-Democratic system, supply and mass work, egalitarianism	-Strong efforts to reorganize and regularize
Military Training	-Conventional training and technical skills, specialization	-Guerilla, small unit training, political emphasis	-Recognize past neglect of military training, emphasize skills
Men or Weapons	-Weapons and technology first	-Men and ideology first	-Men with weapons
Supporting Policies	-Eliminate military regions	-Maintain military region	-No indication of change
	-Reduce non-regular forces	-Maintain production corps, local forces	-Regularization, if not reduction of regional forces. Production Corps detached from PLA
		-Develop own defense industries	-Import in order to develop own industries, some imported weapons system
<u>Nuclear Development</u>			
Pace of Development	-Gradual development	-Maximum effort	-Increased pace

<u>ISSUE</u>	<u>PROFESSIONALS</u>	<u>RADICALS</u>	<u>CURRENT TREND</u>
Priority	-Regional strike	-Intercontinental	-Regional with developing intercontinental capability
Warhead	-Smaller Yield	-Megaton warhead	-Unclear
Delivery Vehicle	-IRBM/MRBM/Bomber Vehicle	-ICBM	
Tactical	-High Priority	-Low priority	-No apparent interests or development
Reliance on Outside Support	-Heavy reliance on Soviet support	-No compromise with Soviets	-Intangible reliance of U.S.
Doctrine and Policy	-Assured retaliation	-Minimum deterrence -No first use	-Capabilities permit only minimum deterrence
<u>Defense Budget Allocation</u>	Major Program	-General Purpose Force	-Strategic Force
Weapon systems	-Conventional	Nuclear	-Public attention to general purpose, continued missile development
Nuclear weapons	-Tactical	Strategic	-Unclear
By Services	-Regular Force	Militia	-Strategic
Regular Forces	-Ground forces	Navy & Air Force	-Regular forces
Ground Forces	-Infantry	Others	-Edge to Navy & Air Force
Air Force	-Tactical Air	Air Defense	-Increased emphasis on armor and mechanized forces
By Types of Expenditures	-Procurement	Military Subsistence	-Increased levels of cross-tng
Weapon Supply	-More imported wpns	Fewer imported weapons	-Procurement
Heavy vs. Light conventional R&D	-Heavy	Light	-Upgrade of artillery caliber, improvements in light weapons
	-Less R&D	More R&D	-More

current posture. First, China's posture is forward looking. From the standpoints of tradition, communist ideology, and great power position, China's policy inevitably must turn outward and this study's conclusion, however tentative, is that China has begun to do so. Secondly, this forward looking policy increasingly is taking the military form of a conventional military posture. This conclusion is based on the arguments of this study that the two sides of the strategic debate contain an inherent logic of their own. To come to the point, a Chinese defense posture dominated by the professional line will tend to develop conventional capabilities and Chinese policy initiatives will be of the type most easily supported by general purpose forces backed by a limited strategic deterrent.

In addressing the prospects for Chinese strategy based on China's limited deterrent capability in 1973 K.C. Yeh projected the following assessment of China's strategic choices:

In the absence of potential nuclear retaliation, the only military deterrence available is threatened retaliation by conventional forces. To the extent that such a threat is a deterrent, the Military Modernist (professional) policy would place China in a stronger position than the Radical Progressives' (Maoist) stopgap recommendation (crash nuclear program backed by militia) since it would prepare a larger, more mobile, and better equipped conventional force. But China's response to the U.S. threat in 1958 and the Soviet threat in 1969 indicates that it has little faith in its invulnerability or in its own conventional deterrence capability. Thus until China achieves full confidence in its own nuclear deterrence capability,

its reaction to a direct nuclear threat will again likely be conciliation and disengagement, especially in the case of a Radical Progressive leadership that adheres strictly to Mao's proscriptions against fighting while unprepared for self-protection.⁹ (Emphasis added.)

With the professionals obviously in charge, the focus of studies on Chinese strategic behavior should be on the significance of the juxtaposition of the professionals' tendency to support the development of conventional forces with the tenet of Mao's People's War to avoid conflict when not prepared.

The apparent pause to review policy in the aftermath of the Chinese decision to establish relations with the U.S. and the invasion of Vietnam may well reflect Chinese attempts to assess and redirect military development efforts.

If the result of the post invasion review is the continuation of the professional trend, and indications are that it will be, the Chinese will move closer to the professional position of propensity for limited wars and further from the Maoist position of cautious while in a position of weakness. In defensive strategy against nuclear attack, armed invasion and special war, this trend will follow steps outlined in Hsu Hsiang-chien's Army Day speech in August 1978. In preparation for limited war, such as the Vietnam invasion, and the possible consequences of the attendant risks, (for example, Soviet responses ranging from

limited to general attack) this trend means increased emphasis on technical steps required for the modern battlefield.

Thus, the Chinese recognize the challenge and requirements of the modern battlefield. They are engaged in a complex effort to prepare their military forces to meet these requirements. This effort is largely internal, focused on repairing the damage to the army by radical policies and restoring order, discipline, and direction. While examining and debating the alternative modern capabilities and force structures appropriate to defense needs, the Chinese in the meantime are trying to increase the efficiency of their limited capabilities. These efforts are evident in both hardware and software. Under this dual policy, software development will be characterized by a revolutionary look backward to Mao's policies for a poor army and a forward look to modern weapons systems, techniques, and doctrine appropriate to a military superpower.

This dual policy has appeared to at least one observer as "schizophrenic".¹⁰ But in light of China's current modernization dilemma, limited capabilities, multi-level threats, and recent political turmoil, there is sound logic behind this duality. Furthermore, the dialectical nature of communist decisionmaking encourages the pursuit of contradictions within a given situation and the Chinese leaders (principally, but not exclusively those

associated with Mao)' have used analysis by contradiction and struggle within "two lines" to develop policy.¹¹ After two years of reform, reorganization, and redirection, the Chinese may well be ready to reevaluate their military policies again.

China's defense policy will continue to rest on a military strategy that exploits its geography and huge population, a foreign policy that enlists Western support against a common enemy while attempting to take advantage of world power shifting to the Third World, and an economic program that promises self-sufficiency by about 2000. While the Chinese concentrate on the short term, conventional Soviet threat, they have not neglected other potential long-term threats. Therefore, to meet the current crisis in strategy and to remain as flexible as possible, the Chinese appear to have adopted a three-part defense program of diplomatic initiative, weapons production, and military reform. Globally, they have enlisted Western assistance to balance Soviet power in the short run. The appearance of support for the U.S. and NATO against the Soviets is the current key to the Chinese diplomatic program. In addition, the Chinese have secured Western and Japanese economic assistance for their long term development programs. Militarily, the Chinese have publicly acknowledged the importance of NATO as a balance to the Soviet threat against them. They oppose U.S. accommodation to the Soviets on SALT,

encourage a tougher U.S. anti-Soviet stand in general, and are attempting to exploit U.S. naval presence to their own ends by using it to counter the growing Soviet naval preserve in the Western Pacific. Finally, in counter-moves suggestive of traditional Chinese strategy and the dispersal tactics of Weich'i the Chinese have countered Soviet moves in Asia with a diplomatic counter-offensive in Eastern Europe.

The second element of China's defense program is a balanced, gradual program to acquire and produce modern military equipment. This plan will remain as flexible as possible as the Chinese gauge the changing nature of the global strategic situation and shift priorities accordingly.

The third, and perhaps most crucial, part of the program is the internal consolidation and reform of the PLA. This effort will provide the Chinese the military base from which to expand capabilities needed to support an increasing range of strategic options.

In summary, the present Chinese program insures maximum flexibility in meeting their strategic crisis. Diplomatic strengths compensate present military weaknesses. Opportunities for expanded diplomatic maneuver balance immediate military threats and an ambitious economic program assisted by increasing foreign technological input complements efforts to build a modern military force.

CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSIONS

Changes in the strategic situation in the Pacific wrought by the developments in China's military establishment promise to pose hard policy choices for the U.S. While a modern, well armed China can become the stabilizing power long hoped for in America's Asian policy, it also can become a hostile challenger. At present the U.S. and China share a common concern over Soviet military expansion and parallel interests in resolving many problems engendered by third world development. Elements of national strategies of both countries are beginning to converge--although the point of convergence is still in the unforeseen future. But the implications of this convergence are increasingly clear. In terms of national strategies defined by Russell Weigley in the American Way of War, the U.S. no longer can afford to rely on the strategy of annihilation that won us World War II.¹ Rather our increasingly limited strategic capability will require us to perfect the measures of the strategy of attrition which won for us the Revolutionary War and dominated U.S. strategy until World War II. In contrasts, the Chinese are now embarked on a path which will gradually take them away from the People's War strategy

of attrition to a position that will dictate a strategy of annihilation.

In the three part program of China's present strategy--global diplomacy, economic development to include military production, and the reorganization of the military establishment, there are opportunities for the U.S. to influence Chinese strategic development. Such opportunities are based on shared US-Chinese concerns over Soviet military expansion, increasingly open relations with both Eastern and Western Europe, and parallel interests in third world developments. In addition, diplomatic skills will be required to foresee and forestall the development of military crises that could lead to the kinds of confrontations described in Chapter II.

The most difficult questions of military strategy facing U.S. policymakers are those related to the second part of China's program. Chalmer Johnson defined the issues of this question in a recent Foreign Affairs article:

The lines of this new policy seem clear enough. The Chinese are determined to modernize their forces, and this implies closer cooperation with the second world and a continuing commitment to improvements in science and technology....The problem has been the attitude of the United States....In more general terms, the Americans will have to express themselves on the purposes, limitations, and overall policy implications of members of the Western alliance among the Chinese."²

The findings of this study drawn from the thesis of the two lines in China's strategic debate indicate that production decisions will affect the direction of Chinese strategy development. It is always a difficult task to distinguish the military from the civilian usage of industrial and technological exchanges. In the case of China where economic and technical assistance contributes to basic industrial development its impact brings immediate military benefits. Where the U.S. has choices it must exercise them and recognize to the extent possible the military impact of economic and technical exchanges. This study suggests that the strategic debate between the two lines of Chinese policy will continue to define the parameters of Chinese choices. A full understanding of the current status of the debate and its implications is necessary to the conduct of U.S. strategy and Chinese policy.

As China continues its post-Mao transition to a new global status the study of Chinese strategy takes on a strategic importance of its own. A modernized military establishment will increase the number of China's strategic options both for good and for mischief. U.S. policy simply must be alert to the opportunities and dangers a stronger China presents to the world.

NOTES

Chapter II

1. Although this study suggests that the Chinese in fact are not as preoccupied with the Soviet conventional threat as they give the impression to be, nevertheless, this is the primary threat to the Chinese. Northern China-Manchuria is their NATO front. The type of Soviet offensive that the Chinese are preparing to defend against is described in Despres, John, et al., Timely Lessons of History: The Manchurian Model for Soviet Strategy, R-1825-NA (Santa Monica, Calif.: Rand, 1976.) The conclusion of this study is that the offensive plan of the Soviets successful invasion of Manchuria at the end of World War II has become the model for present Soviet operational plans. Its application to China is obvious.

2. Edward Friedman, "Rural China Revisited," The New York Times, Sec 4. p. E7:1.

3. Alice Langley Hsieh, Communist China's Strategy in the Nuclear Era (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1962), p. 40.

4. I am indebted to Thomas Etzold, Professor of Strategy, U.S. Naval War College, for the reminder that official U.S. policy as expressed in the Congressional Record during the Dulles era was to overthrow the communist regime in China.

5. Hsieh, Communist China's Strategy, p. 30-40 passion.

6. Conclusions expressed by LTC Tom Roberts, U.S. Army Assistant Liaison Officer, Hong Kong, in a discussion of Chinese military modernization, August 1978. It is a view generally shared by military analysts of China.

7. Edward N. Luttwak, "Problem of Military Modernization for Mainland China," Proceedings of the Seventh Sino-American Conference on Mainland China, Tayler, National Cherjchi University Institute of International Relations, 1978, p. III-3-5 to 7.

8. Jonathan D. Pollock, "Defense Modernization in the People's Republic of China," paper presented at Workshop on the Development of Industrial Science and Technology in the PRC: Complication for U.S. Policy (St. Georges, Bermuda: 3-7 January 1979), p. 3-4.

9. This is a major conclusion drawn from William W. Whitson's study, Chinese Nuclear Strategic Policies, 1958-1972: The Impact of External Threats, Internal Politics and Technology (U). R-1232-PR (Santa Monica, Calif.: Rand, 1973).

10. Conversation with Colonel Orgus M. Fraser, USMC (Ret.), 6 February 1979. Colonel Fraser's own study of PLA modernization has shown that the Chinese are following a slow, methodical approach.

11. Ibid.

12. This is a general conclusion drawn from Nationalist Chinese assessments in a number of semi-official, analytical publications, such as, Issues and Studies, Chinese Communist Affairs Monthly (FEI CHING YUEH PAO)

A good recent example of such analysis is Tsao Chih-ching, "On the Approach and Orientation of Peiping's Army Building and Its Strategy for National Defense," Chinese Communist Affairs Monthly, Vol. 19. No. 11, 5 May 1977, p. 27-33.

13. Hsieh, Communist China's Military Policies, Doctrine and Strategy, P3960, (Santa Monica, Calif.: Rand Corporation, 1969).

14. Ellis Joffe and Gerald Segal, "The Chinese Army and Professionalism," Problems of Communism, November-December 1978, p. 17.

15. Frank Romance, "Modernization of China's Armed Forces." Draft of paper delivered at Annual Convention of Association for Asian Studies, March 1979, p. 16.

16. William W. Whitson, "Discussants' Comments" in Proceedings of the Seventh Sino-American Conference on Mainland China p. III-1-IV.

17. Comment to visiting delegation of retired Japanese military officers, September 1978.

18. Elting E. Morison, Men, Machines and Modern Times, (Boston: MIT Press, 1966), p. 35.

Chapter III

1. The spirit of how tradition influences Chinese behavior is captured in Derris and Ching ping Blodworth's very readable work on Chinese strategy, The Chinese Machiavelli, (New York: Farrar, Straun and Girorex, 1976). One quote is instructive:

"Educated men from Peking to Hong Kong still typecast their contemporaries according to ancient heroes. And since for better or worse this Chinese

quirk is a fact of life, the intellectual scorn that any Westerner may form upon it is totally irrelevant."

P.

2. The importance of Thucydides to study of western strategy is particularly stressed at the U.S. Naval War College where its course of study on Strategy and Policy begins with The Peloponnesian Wars.

3. Lo Kuan-chung, Romance of the Three Kingdoms, 2 vols. Translated by C.H. Brewitt-Taylor, Rutland, VT. (E. Tuttle, 1969). A encapsulation of the Romance is finest in Bloodworth's Chinese Machiavelli, Chapters 14-19. Chapter 19 applies the Three Kingdoms model to the current triangle relationship between China, the USSR, and the U.S. China plays the central role of Shu, the USSR is the northern Wei and the U.S. is the southern Wu. The eventual victor is Wei but even this outcome is filled with historical irony because the original rulers of Wei are replaced by usurpers who complete the victory.

4. See Scott Boorman, The Protracted Game: A Wei-chi Interpretation of Maoist Revolutionary Strategy (New York: Oxford University Press, 1969).

5. The Chinese use of the dialectic here must be considered with caution. It is best interpreted in a duolicistic, not Hegelian or creative, sense (although the Chinese would argue the point). They seem to be talking about the ebb and flow between defensive and offensive postures during a campaign. This is closer to the traditional Chinese dualism of the Yin and Yang - the rise and fall of introductory yet complementary forces.

6. Theoretical Group of Military and Political College of the PLA, commentary on the 40th Anniversary of the Publication of "Problems of Strategy in China's Revolutionary Way," Red Flag, 3 December 1976, p. 45. Two quotations on the following page are also taken from the article.

7. Hsieh, Communist China's Military Policies, p. 17.

8. Hsieh, Communist China's Strategy, p. 167.

9. Whitson, Chinese Nuclear Strategic Policies, 1958-1972 and K.C. Yeh, Communist China's Strategy Options and Priorities in Resource Allocations, R-1234-ARPA (Santa Monica, Calif: Rand, 1973).

10. Compiled from William W. Whitson, Chinese Nuclear Strategic Policies, 1958-1972, Paul Goodwin, Doctrine, Strategy and Ethic: The Modernization of the Chinese People's Liberation

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Professor at the Naval War College who accompanied former
Secretary of Defense Schlessinger on his 1976 trip to China
and Dr. John Bow, a Chinese-American who directs the Educa-
tional Center at Newport Naval Base and who recently returned
from a family visit confirm this impression. Dr. Bow, for
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2. Tsao Chih-ching, "On the Approach and Orientation of Peiping," p. 30.

3. Hsu Hsiang-chien, "Heighten Our Vigilance and Get Prepared to Fight a War," Peking Review, 11 August 1978, p. 5-11.

4. "Showdown in ASia," Newsweek, 5 March 1979, p. 26-32 and "A War of Angry Concern," Time, 5 March 1979, p. 26-35.

5. Jane's Fighting Ships, 1978-1979, p. 95.

6. Pollock, p. 6.

7. Luttwak, p. III-3-7.

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1. Romance, p. 16. The author cites a 19 December 1978 Kwangming Daily article discussing the merits of the continental vs. maritime defense debate of the late Ching Dynasty

2. Joffe and Segal, p. 4.

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5. Joffe and Segal, p. 20.

6. Michael Oksenberg and Steven Goldstein, "The Chinese Political Spectrum" Problem of Communism, March-April 1974, p. 4.

7. See for example, Jay Matthews, "China Planning Sharp Slowdown in Modernization," The Washington Post, see 1, p. 1:1.

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